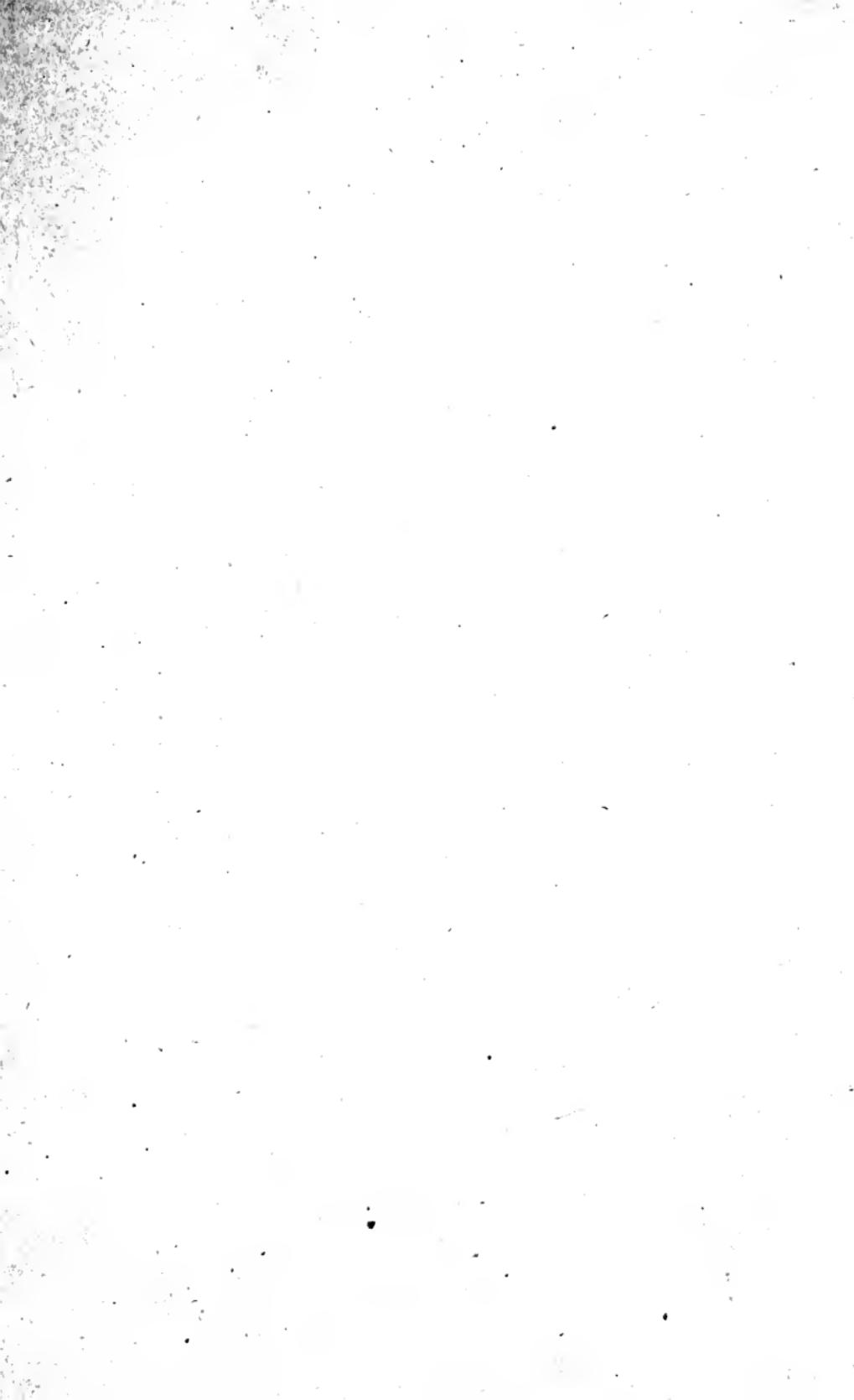
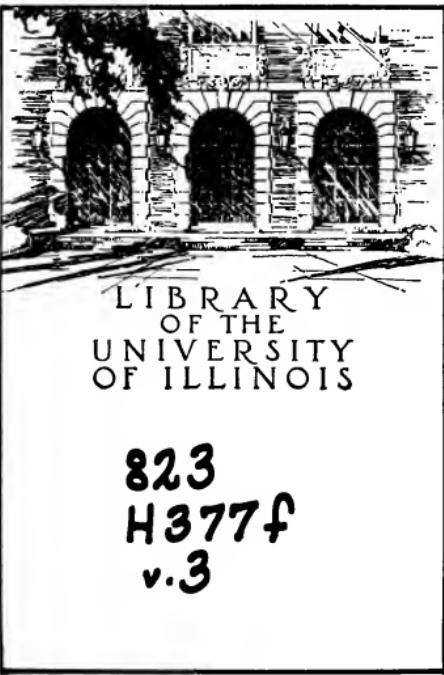




Charles Hare Hemphill:





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Feb. 9. 1857

FREIDA THE JONGLEUR.

Mary S. A. Carter.

BY

BARBARA HEMPHILL,

AUTHOR OF "LIONEL DEERHURST; OR, FASHIONABLE LIFE UNDER THE
REGENCY," "THE PRIEST'S NIECE; OR, HEIRSHIP OF BARNULPH,"
ETC. ETC.

"Whither my younger feet wandered, I betook me among those
lofty fables and romances which recount the deeds of chivalry."—
MILTON.

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FREIDA THE JONGLEUR.

CHAPTER I.

“ N’avez-vous pas souvent aux lieux infréquentes,
Rencontré, tout-à-coup, ces aspects enchantés,
Qui suspendent vos pas, dont l’image chérie
Vous jette en une douce et longue rêverie.”

ABBÉ DE LILLE.

“ In my pilgrim’s disguise I directed my way towards Grenoble, far as the road permitted, travelling by the banks of the Iser, and selecting the most retired paths, as, happily, I learned from several of the penitents who were going to perform penance at some favourite Alpine shrine, that persecutions against Jews, Heathens, Jongleurs,—in short, against all who were not Christians,—

just then were carried on with the most ruthless cruelty in Bavaria and the adjacent principalities.

"It was October, the weather genial, and being looked upon as a pilgrim, occasionally I had been conveyed part of the way on horses or asses, so my journey passed more rapidly and with less fatigue than I had anticipated ; and being, amidst all the vicissitudes of my chequered life, an enthusiastic admirer of nature, I was charmed with the scenery which surrounded my path, the finest, most fruitful valleys, spreading out at the base of sterile mountains. Now I found myself in a solitude so profound and silent, it seemed as if I alone inhabited the earth. A few miles farther, and I would unexpectedly enter a village full of the busy scenes of life, rife with petty cares and anxieties. Never can I forget the glorious vision which burst on my astonished, delighted soul, about the third week of my journey.

"Though late in October, the weather was oppressive ; and in consequence of the

solitary road I pursued, I met no conveyance ; in fact, for the last five days I had not seen a human being ; and my provisions being nearly exhausted, I felt uneasy lest I had diverged too far from the general road ; if not, I could be no great distance from Grenoble.

“ It was afternoon, the sun still high in the heavens, as, weak, and from languor incapable of observation, I lay down under the shade of a clump of pine-trees, and soon fell into a deep sleep. It was sunset ere I awoke, and starting up from forgetfulness, beheld, far as the eye could reach, the towering Alps. Higher and higher they rose, until their lofty heads seemed to reach the heavens, while here and there the glowing light was reflected on their glassy sides in all the varied colours of its declining rays. Truly, the departing glory shone forth in a thousand changeable tints. Fantastic forms of crystal and gold sprang up before me ; and while in rapture I still gazed they vanished, and in their place appeared pyramids rivalling in lustre and

colouring the sapphire's hue. A moment, and they, too, were gone ; and more imposing, if less brilliant objects succeeded ; for the sun's disc which, in the pride of power, seemed at its retreat to have dilated, by this time had solely disappeared, and the shades of night threw some of the lofty range into deep shadow ; while others of the stupendous heights, covered with eternal snow, shone forth in dazzling, unsullied white, gigantic, ghostly guardians of the scene, undisturbed by the roaring waters which, wildly bursting through every barrier, rushed impetuously forward, levelling all which checked their progress. How rapturously I viewed this natural phenomenon in its sublime grandeur, mocking man's pigmy efforts after perfection ! My soul was elevated by this manifestation of the Creator's glory. 'Here,' I exclaimed, 'is an altar worthy of the unknown God !—Him, the mysterious, the omnipotent, whom the fathers of His people worshipped until, in the deification of human passion, they offended his Majesty, by bowing before idols, the work of their hands. Oh !' I continued,

‘were it not that I am bound to Revenge, how gladly would I seek shelter amidst these profound solitudes, and thus spend the residue of my hapless life !’

“ Freida,” gravely interrupted Longris, “this is the second night I have spent in this unhallowed grove, to learn the particulars by which I am to escape ruin. And when time is so precious, dare not again to indulge in these bursts of enthusiasm, which savour strongly of insanity ; misery has made you mad.”

“ Well, Longris, it was on the 28th of October that I reached the forest of Chartreuse, on the borders of which stands the castle, consecrated by the loves of Beatrix Visconti and the gay Templar ; but, however admirable in itself, it seemed a toy,—a bauble after the Alpine region. The night was closing in, and the chime of a great bell, summoning St. Bruno’s monks to vespers, fell loudly on my ears. Acquainted with the habits of feudal chiefs, I knew that vespers over, the drawbridge would be let down and the portcullis dropped for

the night; so I hastened onward by an avenue cut through the forest, and this brought me direct to the castle.

“ It rose on a slight elevation, and from the main building, but connected by colonnades, were two wings, that to my left, and which pointed to the east, was a chapel; while the one to the right was appropriated to the accommodation of the Valois’ numerous retainers. Like the Templars, the Count never permitted servitors to witness the scenes of his banquets, oft dissolute;—it might lessen their respect, consequently his influence; but a train remained at a certain distance ever ready to attend his summons.

“ When I entered the inner court of the castle, it was so dark that I could not distinctly see or distinguish the features of any object, thus had no opportunity of marking the improvements described by Lady Beatrice. The principal building, and which I expected to have found lighted up for the banquet, for report said, that the Count de Valois was so devoted to pleasure, that

few evenings passed without his halls being thrown open to numerous guests,—was in total darkness ; and as its princely banners, fanned by the breeze, waved to and fro in the dim twilight, they added something shadowy and mysterious to the scene ; the chapel, too, appeared enveloped in gloom. Observing some light from the other side, I advanced in that direction, and, as the long, narrow casements reached within a few feet of the ground, I had a view of the interior ; and, with no small terror, beheld, seated at a long table, plentifully covered with viands and the rich wines of Dauphiny, the fierce soldier to whose care I had been consigned, when, during Edrid's trial, I was seized with convulsions at the Louvre. Along with him were several of his companions, the same I had seen indulge their demoniacal passions when the wretched tower near Montfaucon was fired ; and with these were two of the dancing-girls of the tribe of the Saxon Jongleurs, also a young rope-dancer ; so, should I be noticed, they could identify me as being a creature

of flesh and blood, in despite of my supposed death. Between their deep draughts, a set of sorry musicians set up a violent noise on various instruments; then the soldiers joined their voices in ballads or blasphemy as the temper of the moment directed. In the midst of this, being mostly intoxicated, a quarrel ensued: they all started from their seats, and, as I saw some of them approaching a door which opened into the colonnade, where I must have been seen, I darted forward towards the chapel, and just stumbled against a sacristan, who had been lighting up the altar. Addressing him in pilgrim fashion, I slipped a gold coin into his hand, observing,—

“ ‘ I have come from a far distance to see Charles Count de Valois; finding him absent, and being a stranger, will you, holy man, direct me to some lodging where I can escape the notice of these revellers ? ’

“ The sacristan shook his head, and then said,—

“ ‘ Pilgrim, who told you that the Count de Valois was absent?—and what is your business?’

“ I answered,—

“ ‘ From all I have seen since entering this court, I concluded that the Valois was absent. The gloom of this castle, the intemperance of the serving-men and retainers—and which the proud Count would not permit—assure me. Speak! Am I correct? Credit my assertion, that the Count will not refuse me an interview.’

“ Again the sacristan shook his head, without speaking.

“ ‘ Is the Count in the château?’ I demanded. ‘ Pray satisfy me on that point.’

“ ‘ He is,’ answered the sacristan, mysteriously.

“ ‘ Difficult of access?’ I inquired.

“ ‘ That depends on your business,’ he answered, dryly.

“ ‘ Friend,’ said I, ‘ here is this to dispose of in charity, as you may best approve;’—and I slipped him two more

gold pieces ; — ‘ now hasten to the Count, and tell him that the person whose life he saved in the council-chamber of the Louvre demands an audience.’

“ ‘ Your name ? ’ said the sacristan.

“ ‘ My vows forbid,’ I answered somewhat haughtily ; for I saw that the sacristan expected, by raising difficulties, to gain more money. My ruse succeeded : he advanced to the front of the château ; I followed, and was still more surprised at seeing the principal entrance wide open, its spacious marble hall dimly lighted by a single lamp, that rested on a table. All was so silent, so desolate, that the steps of the sacristan, as he mounted the marble stairs, were echoed back ; this appeared strange, but the scenes of that night, witnessed in the château of the Valois, well accounted for its neglect and solitude.

“ I was not kept long waiting : the sacristan returned, saying to me,—

“ ‘ Pilgrim, I have done you good service ; should you please to give another mite

towards the support of the wretched inhabitants of these Alpine regions, you will find me near the chapel ; and, as your charity hopes to meet its reward, let not your left hand know what your right hand gives.'

"'But what said the Count to my demand of an audience ?'

"'He will tell you,' answered the sacristan. I looked in the direction he pointed, and saw a person in black approach, bearing in his hand a dark lantern.

"'Are you,' he demanded, 'the pilgrim who demands audience of the Count de Valois ?'

"'The same,' I replied. 'What said the Count ?'

"'Merely these words, 'Tell the pilgrim, I can form no opinion as to who he is, and that, except the business is urgent and of moment, not to intrude.'

"'To me, it is most urgent,' I replied ; 'and when the Count sees me he will at once remember the circumstance alluded to in

my request of an interview : thus I have no fear.'

"Come on, then," he said ; and led the way through the hall. By this time I fancied that I could account for all that appeared mysterious : from the mourning of the servant, most probably some of the Count's princely house were dead ; and, as he was a man of violent passions, in the first ebullition of his sorrow, everything in his household had been neglected. This conclusion, at least, appeared satisfactory ; and I followed my guide up a wide staircase. As he held down his lantern to light my steps, I perceived that two colossal figures in bronze stood at either side, holding immense branches for lights. Thus we passed on through several suites of apartments,—some of them appeared very spacious, and, as the moonbeams forced their way through the casements, in many places they were reflected back by immense mirrors ; but this was all I could discover by the partial

light,—at length we came to a small wainscoted room; pushing back a panel, my guide entered a long, narrow passage, cut, I should suppose, through the wall, and here and there lighted by a small argent lamp. Now all my courage failed,—I knew the desperate character of Valois: probably he had at once guessed who I was, and, repenting the confidence he had placed in me, would have me buried for ever in the dungeons of his proud castle, or, perhaps, murdered. I wondered at my own temerity in entering the lion's den; all his long-practised cruelty rushed to my mind, and I was unable to follow my guide, who, on opening a door, and seeing me still at the farthest end of the passage, approached, and, observing my agitation, said, in a low voice,—

“ You have nothing to fear from the Valois; here, I will support you.” His manner was kind, and, though by no means reassured, I leant on his arm.

“ ‘ This,’ said he, ‘ is the door to the Count’s room; enter,—I can wait below

to light you back,—but have not permission to intrude.'

"Before I could answer, he was gone, and I saw the passage-door close after him; there was now no retreat,—and with faltering steps I staggered into the apartment of the Count, but started back with surprise at the scene presented to my view.

CHAPTER II.

“ What man is raised on Fortune’s wheel aloft,
Let him not triumph in his bliss elate ;
For when she smiles with visage fair and soft,
Then whirls she round, reversing his estate.
Fresh was the verdure in the sunny croft,
Yet soon the wither’d flow’rets met their fate ;
And things exalted most, as chanceth oft,
Fall from on high to earth with ruin great.
Therefore ought none too greatly to rejoice
In greatness, nor too fast his hope to hold ;
For one that triumphs, great pain is to fail,
But lowly meekness is the wiser choice ;
And he must down, that is too proud and bold,
For every mountain stoopeth to the vale.”

Buonaggiunta Urbiciani.

“ It was a small square chamber : the rude walls unadorned. Just opposite to the entrance-door there was an altar appropriately furnished ; and at either side of it hung

heavy black curtains, thrown into strong relief by four large tapers which stood on the altar. At the other side of the apartment were two narrow casements, through which a faint twilight penetrated — these were of stained glass. Nearly in the centre of this gloomy room, on a high arm-chair, covered with black, reclined Charles, Count de Valois — a table with a missal, lamp, and crucifix, beside him.

“The Count rested his head against the chair: his form was wrapped in sackcloth. His finely chiselled features, then of marble paleness, expressive of sadness. I never saw any person look so unhappy. Near to him sat a friar, whose back was to the door.

“Having witnessed constant acts of penance among different sects in Palestine, I guessed that De Valois must be under some ordeal of the kind. All apprehension of personal danger being removed, my courage returned. Respectfully advancing, I meekly said, ‘Noble Count! — ere I could finish the sentence he uttered a low cry, exclaiming —
“‘Holy Virgin, do the powers of hell in

all things prevail against me, that the spirit of the Jongleur thus haunts my misery.'

"The Friar stood up and gazed at me. At once I remarked, 'Noble Count, calm these fears of the preternatural; ere the tower of Montfaucon was destroyed, I had escaped from its shelter; thus my life was preserved.'

"De Valois heaved a natural sigh, as if relieved; but the friar, whose meek countenance I had been admiring, snatched the crucifix and held it to the Count's lips, observing, 'Can that person, whose appearance is so prepossessing, be the abandoned Jongleur who caused so much of woe in Paris, and would have won her son, the minstrel, from his hopes of heaven?'

"I answered, 'I came here to speak to Charles de Valois. Let that holy symbol remain in his hand, and then, though I were the Evil One, I could work him no ill. Can you gainsay me, friar? Is not this your doctrine?'

"I spoke scornfully, and with a presumption ill befitting my lowly state.

“ ‘ Though Freida speaks scornfully, D’Esculo,’ said De Valois, in a weak voice, ‘ she is right ; and infidel as she is, still she is connected in my memory with’—he shuddered—‘ the darkest scene of my life ; and, although I was perfectly sincere in my wish to serve her son, still I am persuaded that his cruel death was hastened by my interference ; and all humble and degraded as is this woman, I would, with the Church’s permission, include her in my vow of retribution.’

“ While he spoke, the friar assumed a look of stern disapprobation, then said,—

“ ‘ We, in the name of the holy Church, grant you, Charles de Valois, permission to hold converse with this woman, but let your communication with the infidel be short. From Hubert Clisson and the Père Lagravare, I have heard of how this Freida hardened her heart against the consolations of religion—thus I consider her unworthy your charity.’

“ ‘ Friar,’ I retorted, bitterly, ‘ you mistake your High Priest’s mission ; He came

to call sinners to repentance, not to taunt and revile them.'

"Never can I forget the honest look of the friar's countenance, as clasping his hands together, he meekly answered,—

"‘Freida de Lor, your rebuke is just. Oh! that I possessed grace to convert you—to me and to others, that you deem not of, it would be a source of the greatest pleasure. Turn, then, your thoughts towards heaven; and I promise, that even on earth you shall receive a reward beyond your highest hopes.’

"I replied, haughtily, ‘Friar, you over-rate your powers! As I travelled here, in the towering Alps—in the roaring waters—in the soft rustling of the fading leaves, I might have found a lesson more divine and imposing than the voice of man can ever utter. But, friar, there glows in my bosom a passion so fierce, that, had you power to translate your faith into my soul, I would wrestle against it, lest it might conquer my purpose, evil though it be.’

"‘Well,’ said the friar, mildly, ‘though you thus harden your heart, I give not up my purpose.’ He looked kindly at me,

adding, ‘Freida, after your interview with the Count, I shall direct the guide who conducted you here to lead you to a cell I occupy while sojourning with De Valois, then shall I hold converse with you ; and darkened indeed must be your spirit, if, after the communication I mean to make, it still adheres to its present infidelity, rejecting the hope of redemption.’

“With these words the Friar D’Esculo retired, leaving me alone with the PENITENT.

“De Valois had moved his attitude, and was stooping over the table, his head supported on his left arm ; his right hanging listlessly by his side ; his eyes—those full blue orbs which, when last we met, had beamed such scorn and hatred—were now with their mournful expression fixed on mine, as if to divine my purpose without the aid of speech ; but I was confounded at all I saw. Could remorse have truly reached his heart ? or was this act of penance performed only as an expiation of past sins, preparatory to the committal of new ones ; for this mode of expiation I had often seen practised in Palestine by the Knights Tem-

plars and other devout Christians? And while making this calculation on what I witnessed, I remained perfectly silent. Seeing no prospect of my addressing him, the Count, in a calm voice, at length said—

“ ‘ Freida de Lor Girion, come you here in that disguise to taunt my misery, or require you my assistance? If the former, it is a useless cruelty, for my spirit is humbled to all humility: if the latter, you shall be satisfied. Speak! What is your object in thus seeking me, who has so long considered you as one numbered with the dead?’

“ ‘ Noble Prince,’ I replied, respectfully, ‘ certainly not to taunt: for until I entered this gloomy chamber, methought that in all the pride of power and prosperity you held your court within this gorgeous palace. A boon I did seek at your hands—but under your present affliction, I am aware that, except alms, which I require not, no other petition should be offered; but, noble De Valois, when this penance of your Church is past—and, in truth, methinks it a hard one, to see thy manly form and high spirit

subdued to bend to the will and fantasies of barefooted friars—then, with your permission, shall I supplicate from you the boon I hope to obtain.'

"I was retiring, but he called out,—
'Freida! can it be possible that you have not heard of my misfortune? I did suppose that the voice of thousands — nay, tens of thousands — had exultingly proclaimed throughout France the downfall of the proud Valois, the ruler of kings,—the destroyer of the Templars,—the executioner of the Marigni! Aye, there,—there, beyond all others, lay my crime! Elevated on his high gibbet, Enguerand Marigni called aloud his forgiveness of me, his persecutor; and by that act of Christian piety awakened towards me the vengeance of God. Yes! Marigni's voice pierced above the clouds, and was heard by the Christ, and my condemnation was pronounced; but the retribution—oh! it was dreadful, too dreadful! The power of man could not inflict it! The heart of man cannot endure it!'

"He groaned in agony; and through

the lofty apartment the doleful sound was echoed, and it seemed as if the place was filled with the wail of troubled spirits.

“ My heart was moved with compassion at witnessing the abject state to which misery had reduced the most despotic prince that ever ruled in Christendom, for his royal brother and nephew had been but the puppets of his will. I would have said something to console him, but I knew not his sorrow, or how to measure my words to his humour. So seeing the crucifix, which, in the emotion of his anguish, had glided from his hands, lying at his feet, I raised it, and handed it to him. The tide of his ardent passions—even then ardent—turned.

“ ‘ You are right, Freida,’ he cried. ‘ By this I should endure all; by this I may be saved the eternal prolongation of woe—unutterable woe, to which the priests say what I now suffer is but a transient torture.’

“ He shuddered. I saw him make an effort to rise, as if to kneel, but he fell back on his seat. Another groan escaped;

and then I heard him pray with fervour, but in a low voice. When he appeared more composed I said, ‘Noble Valois, shall I now retire?’

“‘ I would speak to you,’ he said languidly, for he was much exhausted, and his speech was thick and husky.

“I bowed in compliance. He continued, “‘ You seek some favour from me; express it freely; I would serve the mother of Edrid,—that bright, hapless youth. But, Freida, this will be our last communication; all must be settled now. We meet no more!’

“As he spoke these words he again leant over the table.

“Addressing him in a timid voice, I said, ‘Count, you are now lowered in spirit and health by the sufferings of severe penance. In such a state you naturally yield yourself solely to the dominion of your confessor. My conference with you should be private. From your speech I judge you could not now grant it; and by betraying me to the friar, or whatever priest shrives you—as you most surely would—he must

know my secret wish, and probably prevent its execution, or in fanatic zeal consign me to the flames.'

" 'I press not for your confidence,' answered the Valois, and in his air and manner might be distinguished some glimmerings of his original pride, 'But, Freida, you mistake our priests; they would not,—they dare not, betray the communications of confession, though it saved the lives of their whole fraternity; by the blessed Virgin, they dare not betray the poorest serf, though by so doing they won the Holy Sepulchre. But thou art an infidel, and understandest not these doctrines.'

" 'Be it so, noble Count, at thy pleasure. Undoubtedly I mistake not the order of confession held so sacred. By word or signature it is never betrayed. The priest's tongue would wither ere it would utter one sentence; the hand would thrust itself into the living coals and shrivel to a skeleton ere it would write down the secret thus revealed, though a nation's safety depended on it. But there are ways of communication independent of speech or

writing. Ere thought was formed into language men could understand each other ; else how had words been constructed ? The Jongleurs for ages have had a mode of expression by signs and tokens. The Templars, the Freemasons—all fraternities—have their peculiar method of conveying their ideas independent of speech ; and think you the Christian monks are deficient in this art ? Mark me, Count ; when residing for years in Syria I knew the priests of all sects—Christians, Jews, Mahometans, Armenians, Persians. Enough, my secret known, Revenge, my last remaining good, may be hurled from me ; and beneath the cells of the Chartreuse my body be submitted to the torture here, preparatory to the eternal woe to which its merciful monks will doom me hereafter.'

" ' Revenge, said you ? revenge ! ' exclaimed Valois. ' Infidel as thou art, I would save you from the woe that dark passion has entailed on me. Freida, when last we met my soul was fired by its influence ; and soon was it to be satiated by full enjoyment, if the consummation of crime

can be deemed enjoyment. Until Enguerand Marigni's execution all the triumph was mine ; but constant success against my enemies rather increased their number. Wherefore I know not, but on seeing Marigni dead I experienced a sudden pang of sorrow,—a strange regret,—was it that as the flame expires when the oil which has fed it is exhausted, that on having him I so hated removed by my own act from further persecution, I felt a want—a vacuum in my mind ? This very languor irritated my temper ; and observing looks of dissatisfaction among my courtiers, I sarcastically said, ‘Seigneurs, I have been informed, that one and all of you at a banquet at the Hôtel St. Pol’s dared to declare your belief in the Minister’s innocence. If so, how much do I not owe to chiefs who against their convictions assisted towards his execution ?’

“ ‘ This ill-timed ebullition offended the forty barons I had bribed to my purpose. Thus a cabal was formed to humble me : still more unfortunate, the Queen-mother refused to receive me ; as did Louis Hutin’s Queen. Hoping time might soften down

these asperities, I hastened here, threw open my portals, and with a gallant company rushed into every excess of licentious revelry. Though this exhausted my health, my spirits were renovated, and I again returned to Paris, and the following day proceeded to the palace of the Louvre to pay my devoirs to Louis Hutin. Freida, it were a bitter mortification to dwell on the scene that there took place. Suffice it, then, that during the few weeks I had been dissipating with the chieftains in this château, my enemies, or rather let me say TRUTH, had prevailed against me. Marigni's memory was not only acquitted of the crimes charged against him, but he was universally mourned, even to the royal family putting on black ; and his relatives—alas ! I had destroyed two of his children—resided in the palace of the Louvre, while his widow and surviving family were provided for nobly.

“ The circumstances which led to this change were simple. The Père Lagravare had been called in to attend on Louis by the Queen-mother, who suspected some treachery. In a few days he restored the

King to perfect health ; and being a scientific man, and a devoted partisan of the Marigni, he explained the process of heat by which the waxen image of Louis had assumed its mysterious appearance ; and none doubted, what was indeed the case, for the Père proved, beyond denial, that I had bribed some of the confidants of the Marigni to put these plans into execution. Consequently, the Bishop of Chalons was freed from prison, and restored to the chancellorship. In short, when I entered the palace, I found the King surrounded by my enemies ; or worse, to contend with friends and relations who considered their dignity compromised by this exposure of my deceptions ; among the latter, was my brother the Count D'Evreux, and the then Archbishop of Rheims. On first seeing me Louis was confused, and seemed at a loss how to receive me, looking around on the company, as if to divine their purpose, perceiving which I advanced with a haughty but courteous air, addressing him with my usual familiarity. This stroke of policy mastered Louis, he grasped my

hand, spoke his greeting loudly, saying hastily,—

“ ‘ We welcome you back, good uncle ; by Saint Denis, had you delayed much longer, my coronation should have been unblessed by your presence, and we should not wonder if the doughty Count of Flanders honoured us with a visit in your stead—what say you, seigneurs ? —choose we the Count Valois, to shield us from the fierce Fleming ? ’ and he laughed aloud at this unmeaning address got up to disguise his embarrassment.

Before any could reply, I cast a look of scorn around. I had discovered by a glance that public opinion was strong against me ; and every attempt at conciliation would have been a tacit acknowledgment of guilt, so I assumed the air and manner of an injured man, and proudly demanded an audience of his Majesty. This was readily granted by Louis, who, in truth, felt undecided how to act. In yielding to me he merely obeyed the influence of habit, for I had governed his mind from childhood, and this

influence had now to struggle against the dictates of conscience—for Louis never ceased regretting having consented to Marigny's death—and the fear of offending his Queen and the Queen-mother, both of whom he tenderly loved. But I am dwelling too long on this scene. Learn, then, the audience was granted, and everything for the war with Flanders was arranged according to my advice; thus I seemed again to triumph; but I was not deceived. I knew that the Court viewed this conduct of Louis more as a proof of his weakness than of my innocence, and that it exposed him to contempt without gaining me esteem; but appearances were preserved. And while I possessed power I could command partisans. So far I had supported my dignity, and acted with profound policy; and as I rode out of the Louvre I gloried in thinking that, despite of my numerous enemies, I was still *ruler* over France.

“ As the King had retired to the Queen's apartments, who was confined by indisposition, most of the nobles who had

attended the council accompanied me from the palace. It chanced to be that hour of the evening when the mechanics and working classes were retiring from business; and just as we rode from the outer court, a number of tradespeople, followed by a vast crowd of the *canaille* of Paris, its very abomination, rushed towards me, shouting out like demoniacs, ‘Up with the Valois, the good Valois, the noble Valois ! and may all his enemies perish like the Marigni, the proud Norman, the sorcerer !’ and a thousand other such speeches, the vile hinds continued to utter. Provoked at this ill-timed popularity, I strove to check its utterance; but the wretches who had acquired a self-importance by the quarrels between my party and that of the Minister, were not to be checked, and not only continued their shouts, but presumed to catch at the housings of my noble steed, who, indignant at their advances, pawed the earth, and snuffed the air, and could scarcely be reined in from trampling on them; while I, who had preserved my equanimity before

Louis and his courtiers, felt provoked and embarrassed by the nauseous flattery of the ill-bred crowd ; and my anger increased when I saw some of the chieftains, with a shrug of disgust, turn back towards the Louvre ; among these was the Chancellor, Marigni's friend and defender.

“ ‘ The primate, a sarcastic man, seemed much amused at the adulation I was receiving ; he laughed sneeringly, observing,—

“ ‘ Most puissant knight, after this homage, our good King of France can no longer hesitate to institute the Order of the Vagrants to your honour—what think you of those insignia ? ’ —and he pointed to a butcher brandishing his slaughtering knife, as he shouted out ‘ The Valois for ever ! ’ ‘ Let me arrange the cognizance—a greasy hand wielding a bloody *couperet* surmounting a coronet—motto, *Omnes concidantur*. ’

“ ‘ Primate,’ I exclaimed, ferociously, ‘ spare your ill-timed witticisms ; and if you wish for peace, use your spiritual authority to dismiss this stolid crowd, else, by the

Saints, I will command my men to illustrate your motto.'

" ' Thus speaking, I sounded the silver call that hung to my breast.

" ' Amused at my annoyance, the primate continued his bantering :—

" ' How comes it, Count, that the moment you attain a good you seem to despise it? How often have I heard you say that power,—the power of ruling over the multitude, was the goal of your ambition? And now when the people elect you as their idol, and fall down and worship, you seem to condemn them in place of applauding their zeal. O Prince! call to your purse-bearer to scatter some gold pieces among them ; so reward their fealty, and —'

" ' Interrupting him passionately, I exclaimed, ' Primate, do you call such wretches the people whose homage I sought? Faugh ! By the Virgin, they are more loathsome than the half-formed vermin of the Nile, in which the breath of life vainly struggles to animate the clay.'

" ' Here the venerable old Bishop of

Paris interfered, and in a calm, stern voice said, ‘Have a care, Count, how you despise your fellow-men,—beings formed in the likeness of their Maker. By such pride you may tempt the anger of an offended God, who in His wrath may render thy stately form more loathsome than the meanest of these you now despise.’

“‘ Provoked beyond endurance at the whole scene, I disdained to answer the pious rebuke. Striking my spurs into the flanks of my steed, which hitherto I had so tightly reined, the spirited animal reared until it stood erect ; then with a sudden bound sprung forward into the midst of the crowd, and, by an evil chance, dashed down a wretched woman, crushing her infant to instant death. The yells that succeeded forbid description. It seemed as if hell had sent forth its legions. And now hundreds raised their voices, uttering awful imprecations, pelting me with bats, sticks, mud. In a few moments I must have fallen a victim to the populace had not my men-at-arms cut a passage for my escape through the crowd, not, however, without injury to

several of the mob. From that hour my popularity was gone, and I became an object of hatred to the people by whom I had so lately been worshipped. Freida, I have dwelt on this scene ; for though at the time it caused in my heart no sentiment but indignation, my mind now often reverts to it. To be brief, for I feel exhausted ; all in which I engaged from that period proved unfortunate. The war with Flanders, solely regulated by my counsels, was unsuccessful ; the spirit of Louis broke under my tyranny, and which he had not sufficient energy to cast off. He died to my severe affliction. I loved the man ; and the person on earth I most hated, my nephew, Philip V., has ascended the throne. Unable to disguise my regret, on the day of Philip's coronation I fled from Rheims.'

"Here De Valois paused ; and then in a voice struggling with convulsive agony exclaimed, 'Almighty Saviour, was not this punishment sufficient, to see the sceptre of my power broken, and my enemy, Philip V., ruler over France ? But no. In the depths of thy wisdom thou knewest my spirit could

not be crushed by such baubles, and that, like unto Pharaoh of old, in scorn I would rise above fortune, mock at reformation, and eschew repentance. So in thy mercy, blessed Redeemer, thou hast awakened my soul by an awful retribution.'

"Again his dismal groans filled the apartment.

"' You had no child, noble Count,' I said.
' What sorrow, then, can press so heavily on your heart? None, surely, to compete with the agony of my despair when I witnessed the execution of my son—my Edrid.'

"He looked wildly at me, and with some of his past pride; then grinding his teeth, with his left hand tore off the right side of his garment of sackcloth; and I uttered an exclamation of surprise at beholding his flesh wear the livid appearance of death.

"' Dead! quite dead!' he muttered, in a voice of inexpressible sadness. And taking a small knife from the table, here and there he pricked the lifeless flesh; still muttering, 'It has no feeling. Charles de Valois is but a breathing corpse—a mass

of living corruption more repulsive than all his pride loathed in the hapless poor. He who ruled over millions could not now resist the veriest insect. Oh, how horrible is my fate !'

" My compassion was awakened as I gazed at the wretched De Valois ; and being aware that all consolation must prove fruitless save what was derived from a Christian's faith, I said meekly, ' Noble De Valois, if earthly suffering is accepted as an expiation of mortal sin, then you will stand acquitted before your Saviour God.'

"' Canst thou, an infidel, speak such words ?' he said. ' But in all things thou art deceitful. Learn, then, Freida, that dreadful as is this infliction, methinks I could have borne it as a just and holy chastisement for my manifold sins ; but the priests say, that being an evil over which I possess no power of resistance, it cannot be accepted as a peace-offering. And, O Freida ! the penance to which the Church has subjected me is far more awful than death. But draw aside that curtain and judge for yourself.'

"I obeyed ; and raising the nearest one beheld the statue of Enguerand Marigni. It was standing on the ground ; the right foot slightly advanced, as if in the act of moving forward, the palm of the hand extended, the eyes full of animation ; in short, so inimitable was the likeness both in features, dress, and expression, that it appeared a breathing form of flesh and blood. Just so had the proud, truthful Norman looked, when, regardless even of the royal presence, he had stepped boldly forward in the council-chamber to assert his innocence. The morning of Edrid's fatal trial rushed on my mind, and I wept aloud as memory dwelt on the terrible scene.

"'Woman,' said the Valois sternly, 'why weepest thou ? What emotions can that figure, the work of Jacques de Lor, awaken in your soul ? Not so in mine. I was Marigni's persecutor, and that of his amiable unhappy family. And each night, ere I retire to rest, alone in this solitary chamber I am compelled to gaze on that statue, and recount to it aloud the acts by

which I compassed the Marigni's ruin, denouncing myself a murderer.'

" He shuddered ; and covering his face, pointed towards the most distant recess. I let the drapery fall over the waxen statue ; and withdrawing the other curtain, beheld, elevated on a low bier, a coffin, covered with crimson velvet, and gorgeously emblazoned with the royal arms of the Valois ; over the head was hung a crucifix, and at the foot a coronet polluted and stained with blood ; within, it was lined with coarse hair-cloth.

" ' Noble Count,' I said with emotion, ' why keep this dismal object before your eyes ?'

" ' It forms a part of my penance,' he answered slowly. ' Freida, sooner or later all must rest within such narrow confines ; but it is my sad fate, while yet alive, and my senses perfect, to experience all the horrors of the tomb. Nightly I lie within that coffin. Oh, blessed Virgin ! when will my miserable soul be released from this afflicted carcass ?'

" ' And to this, noble Count, you have

been doomed by that stern Friar?' And I spoke scornfully.

"' Not so,' he answered. 'On the contrary, this Francesco D'Esculo strives to wean me from so severe a penance, and advises in its place restitution to all whom I have offended, more especially to the family of the Marigni; and, Freida, for his soul's zeal, I nightly offer up prayers and oblations; but, alas! the pious monks of Chartreux insist upon the necessity of self-punishment as necessary to my purification. O Freida! could you but know the eternal hell they represent as my future punishment should I die unabsolved, you might almost rejoice in your infidelity.'

" At that instant, and ere I could answer, I heard the chiming of a distant bell; and a few moments after, a rustling as if persons were approaching. I looked at the Valois to inquire the meaning. He beckoned me towards him, and in a low voice said:—

"' They are coming, and must not see you here, for this weakened frame is unequal to further penance. Here, Freida de Lor,

take this gold as a compensation for whatever injuries I may have done you.'

"So saying, with his left hand he took from a drawer in the table two purses, each containing one hundred broad gold pieces of Spanish coin.

"Now away,' he cried. 'And mark me, let your hapless son rest in peace without seeking revenge on those who hurried his fate.'

"I would have thanked the Count, but he impatiently waved me back. As I hurried through the door which opened into the narrow passage, my feet stumbled over some impediment, and I fell flat on the ground. My dress was discomposed. In gathering it up I raised a scrip. Concluding that it was my own loosened by the violence of my fall, hastily fastening it to my girdle, I hurried on quickly as my knees bruised by the fall admitted, cautiously gliding under the shadow of the wall; and as I saw the long line of monks advance, I crouched down. Happily they did not observe me, but proceeded to the gloomy chamber of De Valois.

CHAPTER III.

“. Meanwhile
Touching, though slightly, on the life to come ;
For thus I questioned : ‘ Shall these tortures, SIR !
When the great sentence passes, be increased,
Or mitigated, or as now severe ? ’

* * * * *

When thus my guide : ‘ No more his bed he leaves,
Except to hear the eternal doom re-echoing rend
The vault.’ ”— DANTE.

“ SOON as the monks had disappeared, I wended my way through the spacious palace until I reached the entrance-hall, with its solitary lamp. There I found the sacristan, impatiently expecting my return.

“ ‘ Ah ! pilgrim,’ he exclaimed ; ‘ this is well—I never hoped to see you again.’

“ ‘ Wherefore not ? ’ I demanded, ‘ but lately I quitted the presence of the noble Count, and made my way here in quest of the person who had guided me to him.’

“ ‘Pilgrim,’ said the sacristan, ‘you know your own secrets best; but if you have aught to disguise or fear, give me a couple more of the gold angels for the use of the poor, and I shall save you from the danger, which, in good faith, I believe to be hatching against you?’”

“ ‘ You shall have them,’ I exclaimed; ‘ now explain yourself more fully.’”

“ ‘ Not here,’ he said, ‘ but follow me to the chapel; you must keep in the shade of the colonnade.’”

“ I obeyed him, and soon found myself within the sacred edifice, which was all—save the altar—in darkness, but that was brilliantly illuminated. I then questioned the sacristan as to the Count’s tortures; he carelessly replied, ‘ Death alone can release him from the Church’s penance. And now, pilgrim,’ he said, ‘ listen attentively, for we have not more than a few moments for our conference. Soon after you went to the Prince the Friar Francesco D’Esculo came down to the great hall, and inquired most particularly of you from me, who could afford him little satisfac-

tion ; he then desired me to call some of the Count's armed retinue ; they conversed a long time, and I heard them say, ‘The sorceress ! the Jezebel ! did she escape us ?’ The Friar seemed to preach peace, and then dismissing them said to me, ‘I must retire ; but, observe, the pilgrim, who sought audience with De Valois, is to be conveyed to my cell.’ By this,’ continued the sacristan, ‘I concluded some danger awaited you ; and as you had behaved liberally, and not a sou of the friar’s have I ever touched,—these holy men love to keep the ANGELS for their own advantage!—ha ! ha ! ha !—so, pilgrim, I warn you of the danger. Again, let me say, you best know what to apprehend’—he was interrupted by the chiming of the bell—‘Ah,’ said he, ‘I have loitered too long here ; crouch behind this monument, and should you be discovered, breathe not my name.’ So saying he hurried from the chapel.

“ The chiming of the bell continued ; a long line of monks entered, their white

robes shining through the partial darkness. They ranged themselves at each side of the altar ; at some distance from it stood four monks of a different order, wearing black cloaks ; others then entered, carrying flambeaux ; and immediately after, reclining on his high chair, borne by two lay brothers, came Charles de Valois. Slowly he was carried to the altar, in front of which stood the Bishop of Chartreux, who had entered by a side-door ; he was clad in sumptuous episcopal robes, glittering with gold and gems. On reaching the steps the Prince was raised, and a monk approached to support him, as he bent his left knee ; the attitude appeared uneasy—his right being completely dead—and I felt relieved when, after some orison, which I was too distant to hear, he was lifted and laid prostrate, in his garment of sackcloth, on the lower step of the high altar. I knew not what prayers were then said, but all the monks joined in the responses, and the groans of the Count echoed sadly through the chapel. This ceremony over, I heard De Valois

speak some words aloud, but his voice was thick and husky. The Bishop put his foot on the Count's neck, and trampled on it—gently, however—then in a loud, sonorous voice, he sung out, ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow,’ &c. All the monks joined, accompanied by the peal of an organ; clouds of incense were flying around, and as the perfumed vapour evaporated, I saw the Valois in his chair, elevated on the shoulders of the tallest monks while a hallelujah was sung—I should say shouted out—and in this manner he was borne away by his bearers in triumph, and laid for the night in his coffin.”

“ Freida,” said the Bishop, “ it was an awful penance, and should teach us to avoid sin; yet I feel for the wretched De Valois.”

“ It was awful,” she answered; “ yet it seems to me that none would submit to such punishment but those by nature cruel. Charles de Valois was known to be the cruellest man in France; when a deadly disease prevented its further perpetration, as the scorpion, disappointed of prey, darts

its venom into its own head, so the dark passion of the Count found a pleasure in torturing his wretched body.

“ To return to myself, I felt very uncomfortable, entertaining no doubt but that I would be committed to the lowest dungeons if discovered by the friar. Upwards of two hours passed away in this manner, ere the sacristan returned ; he then told me that D’Esculo, on his way to join De Valois in his chamber, had again desired to have me led to his cell, which was a small apartment under the tower, having a door that opened by a few steps upwards, to a path in the forest, which led to the monastery ; so that, were it necessary, he could easily have placed me in the power of the monks, unknown to the inhabitants of the château. This was explained by the sacristan, who, for the sake of gold, had become my friend, and now conducted me from the chapel under the shade of trees till we came to a small glade bounded by a branch of the Isere. Here I found a guide with mules ; the sacristan

instructed them to convey me to the cottage of his parents, who resided some leagues from the Count's palace on the high lands.

“ These Alpine peasants, though simple, were humble and attentive ; then the scenery of the Alps was to me a constant source of interest, and, hopeless of revenge, I should probably have continued amidst their solitudes but for the following cause :—

“ One morning when I wished to reward the peasants, I discovered that the scrip which (concluding it to be my own) I had picked up near De Valois' door was one of coarse sackcloth, such as the Mendicant friars wear. In it I found a ring of value, an iron crucifix, some relics, and a roll of vellum impressed with St. Peter's keys, also with the arms of Bavaria and of France.

“ These proved to be important documents : however just now of these parchments I shall speak more freely. Their possession influenced me to return immediately to France ; there, most probably, I might acquire information of Hubert Clisson.

In short, a fresh impetus revived the almost extinguished purpose in my bosom—Revenge.

“ Well, Gaultier, in Paris I found Caleb the Suabian with some provincial minstrels and Spanish dancers ; and I have learned that Hubert Clisson and his daughter Bona have hired an hotel in the Rue Maraveaux, where they are daily expected. They report this Bona of rare beauty. By her mother she is possessed of vast wealth, and a stream of royal blood circulates through her veins ; so princes and nobles will bend before the child of him who acted as an executioner to my Edrid ! Never,—never, shall Hubert thus triumph ! The power now lies with me to deprive Bona of her possessions : but that would not answer my purpose. Gold is but dross. But she shall be offered up as the victim of expiation for her father’s crime—worshipper of Moloch ! —to rouse up the flames of an *auto-da-fé* more quickly to consume my son,—my Edrid ! Nor shall Père Lagravare escape ! —he who, with speech soft as that of a Mahratta Brahmin, still assisted in these

terrible rites of demoniacal cruelty. And, Bishop, you must assist me in this glorious revenge."

"Never!" he exclaimed, rising; "nor after your long tale have you proved the least power to serve. Then, Freida, your excitement savours of madness! I were equally demented to hold further conversation."

He rose to depart in uncontrolled anger.

"Have patience," she cried, "and I will struggle to command my expressions of despair. Attend! The roll of parchments found in D'Esculo's scrip contains the certificate of Bona Clisson's birth, besides several letters of nobility to secure her rights; also a bull, to the same purpose, from Boniface, and the testament of the late Count D'Evreux appointing her sole heiress. These at once confirm her rights of possession; without them her claims are void. And these parchments with their royal impresses are in my possession; if I destroy them, your nephew Foulque will be the heir,—none to dispute the heritage."

"Ha, Freida, this is most fortunate. Thanks! where are these parchments? A

moment should not be lost till their destruction!" Longris, in the enthusiasm of his delight, clasped her hand.

"That rests with me," coldly replied Freida. "Now, Gaultier, you shall find that I am no vain boaster. Lady Agatha D'Abeis is in my power; for, though innocent of actual indiscretion, in a moment of levity she visited the Jongleurs' encampment, to learn by prophecy her future fortunes. While there, Caleb the Suabian, a man of great personal beauty, became enamoured of her—it was a fearful business. Enough: a word that I can utter would disgrace the Lady Agatha! Then, Longris, for present wants I can amply supply you with the gold that was presented to me by Lady Beatrix and De Valois. Now act as I require, and your nephew shall be heir of D'Evreux, Lady Agatha his bride, and you relieved from embarrassment, and restored to the luxuries you so value."

"But what guerdon," he inquired, anxiously, "do you require?—be explanatory. How can I advance your revenge?"

"Needless," replied Freida, "to repeat

my plan of vengeance on Hubert Clisson and his friend Père Lagravare. To its success I must mix in society, else how can I find opportunity? At present, superstition has branded me as a sorceress, and, like a wild beast, I can only find safety in desolate places; for if discovered, I would be committed to the flames! Now, Gaultier, you are the Queen's confessor; nay, listen, I want speech with Agatha D'Abeis, else my plans must fail. Persuade her Majesty, Jane D'Artois, to admit me as a fortuneteller—explain that in the East you had met me a pilgrim, and that my prescience was wonderful!"

The Bishop spoke with agitation,—

"Freida, I might effect this, still must learn what mean you then to do?"

Interrupting him hastily, Freida said,—

"Circumstances must guide my actions. When the Croisses went to Palestine to win the Holy Sepulchre, they could not—until the struggle came—mark out the exact plot of proceeding, and which, of necessity, must be guided by the movements of the enemy.

So it is with me: but the morning is advancing, and ere the busy hum of the city commences, you, Gaultier, must retire from this Apostate's grove, said to be the haunt of evil spirits. Remember, that in Paris you are surrounded with enemies, among whom ranks Philip V."

"I know it," he answered, and then hastily retired from the mystic grove in a state of pitiable agitation.

* * * *

Some apprehension of danger to himself shadowed the prelate's thoughts, at having consented to become an assistant in the Jongleur's plans of vengeance! Then he reflected, that he could merely *en badinage* introduce her to the Queen as a fortuneteller. Thus he fancied no ill could arise; and as to the compunctions of conscience at acting against every principle of truth and justice, by depriving Bona Clisson of her just rights—he had none; for dissipation and sensuality deadened every nobler feeling, though some refinement and morbid sentiment still remained with the sensualist.

CHAPTER IV.

“ By wintry famine roused, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains, which the shining Alps,
And wavy Apennine and Pyrenees,
Branch out stupendous into distant lands,
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave—
Burning for blood—bony, and gaunt, and grim—
Assembling wolves, in raging troops descend ;
And pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north wind sweeps the glassy snow :
All is their prize.”

LEAVING Freida to the contemplation of her wild schemes of vengeance, we shall follow the hunters to the neighbourhood of Laval.

At some leagues distance from the town of Laval, rose the château of the late Baron D'Abeis, where its present heir, Lord Rhodolphe Visconti, had taken up his residence with no prouder retinue than his falconers, huntsmen, grooms, and other varlets; and the

haughty young nobles of Mayenne marvelled that the distinguished Bavarian should for the first time enter the French dominions, and that, too, to take possession of an extensive fief, unattended by a gallant company of knights and gentlemen.

The circumstance which had led to this strange neglect, was the displeasure of the Dame Beatrix, who,—having in the first agonies of her grief for Guy D'Auvergne's fate cursed Paris as the theatre upon which for ages earth's most fearful tragedies had been enacted, and vowed that her son should never wield a lance in its defence, or enter the city stigmatised by his father's cruel death,—on hearing of the D'Abeis' rich and unexpected bequest, yielding to superstitious fears, commanded Rhodolphe to resign it in favour of Lady Agatha, or else to the endowment of some monastery.

For the first time Rhodolphe rejected her counsel, deeming it unreasonable. The acquirement of so much wealth would enable him to push forward a crusade then in contemplation, and an object of profound

interest to all Christian knights. Independent of this, he wished in gallantry to pay his devoirs to Lady Agatha ; moreover, as her beauty had been lauded at Munich by many wandering minstrels, who would not disgrace their divine art by saying aught which might taint a maiden's fame, even though they had heard of her levities.

Indignant at her son's disobedience, and depressed by superstitious anticipations of evil, Beatrix entreated the interference of the Emperor ; but Louis, who at that period was entering into treaties of a secret nature with Philip of France, rejoiced at the opportunity of sending a competent ambassador,—one in whom he placed such implicit trust as Rhodolphe, to negotiate the subject ; and whose visit to France, under the circumstances of the D'Abeis' bequest, would awaken no political surmises. Still, being delicate of offending Beatrix, he affected displeasure, excusing himself to Rhodolphe under a plea, that in affairs of state deception was excusable ; and it was to support this farce that Rhodolphe proceeded to

Mayenne, unaccompanied except by his dependants.

On arriving at the castle, Lord Rhodolphe invited the surrounding barons to a banquet, when they would discuss the best method for wolf-hunting. His noble bearing, graceful address, and munificent hospitality, united to the King's commands to support him in the benevolent purpose, soon won the barons' approval, and for the time being checked their prejudices, emanating from jealousy at a stranger's claiming high position in Mayenne. Among the guests was Foulque D'Evreux, and a band of Parisian nobles, the former having taken possession of D'Evreux as if, in truth, he was its rightful heir; and although he and Lord Rhodolphe were to break a lance for the fair hand of Agatha, still they now met in courtesy; and at this convivial carousal it was arranged that for the next few days the gallant company were to remain with Rhodolphe, and then remove to the Castle of D'Evreux, Sir Foulque their host.

It was a gallant show, the first opening

of that memorable wolf-hunt. One hundred and fifty-three nobles, mounted on powerful steeds, and clad alike in tunics of green, picked out with white, elaborately embroidered in gold and crimson. They wore light casques, encircled by bands of green velours, and crested with small white plumes. In their wake followed numerous attendants, some with led horses, in the event of their being required, and huntsmen with packs of hounds. Among these the Irish pack of Lord Rhodolphe was distinguished for superior strength, proportion, and scent. The inspiring notes of trumpets and horns gave a fresh impetus to the scene ; and as the joyous party dashed off towards the Maine, innumerable echoes reverberated throughout hill and dale the exhilarating notes of keenly expected pleasure.

Though prepared for some proofs of the wolves' depredations, so slothful had been the Northern barons, so blinded by superstition the monks, that they had entered into few inquiries, consequently were ignorant of facts. But now the stern truth of

human suffering was demonstrated to the hunters in the revolting and festering fragments of mortality scattered around. Hundreds of the poor had been devoured by the ravenous monsters,—whole villages desolated. Here and there blazed fires as a temporary protection to the serfs ; but, famishing from hunger, the wolves bounded over and fastened on their victims. Then shrieks of human agony, answered by the shrill screams of vultures and other birds of prey, who, hovering above in hundreds, darkened the air as if a heavy curtain was drawn over the heavens. All presented a scene of appalling horror ; the laws of Nature reumed reversed ; and man—triumphant man—in place of being the killer, the devourer, was the killed, the devoured. A shudder passed over the proud nobles as they thus beheld their own species attacked and conquered by the most loathsome animals that ranged the forest's wilds.

But even in this awful extremity, human virtue, exalted and purified by LOVE, shed its glorious light around, and instances of self-devotion and self-abandonment occurred

which might appear almost incredible. A mother, frantic with grief at seeing her son attacked, to save him, flung herself within the jaws of the devouring monster. A daughter in the bloom of life, to protect the grey hairs of her aged father from a violent death, nobly perished; and a youth, perceiving a horde advance to the hut where he had sheltered his bride, boldly, in the frenzy of despair, attacked them, and, inspired with preternatural courage, drove them off. However, of a truth, such instances were few, the great mass of the people, bewildered with terror, obeyed the first law of nature—self-preservation.

The night was far advanced ere the hunters returned, and this the first day's hunt, although very successful—forty-seven of the monsters being destroyed—in other respects had proved unfortunate. One knight, Sir Bruno of the Loire, was killed by a fall from his horse, two others had their arms lacerated by the wolves, four horses had been frightfully torn by the monsters' attacks, and there had been great

havoc among the dogs. The hunters' toil, for it could not be called pleasure, continued until after sunset, then, ere returning to the banquet, Rhodolphe ordered his courts to be thrown open for the reception of the villagers whose houses had been burned. Influenced by his nobler philanthropy, the barons followed his example, and thousands who the preceding night were houseless wanderers, found shelter and provisions.

As casting their cares aside, the gallant hunters sat merrily down to the rich banquet, loud were their plaudits of the Bavarian's generous consideration for the serfs; and many a deep goblet they quaffed to his health, and courteously he received their compliments, gracefully including each of the party in the success. Now this praise to his rival so inflamed the jealousy of Sir Foulque, that gladly would he have retired from the festive scene, had he not feared to awaken a suspicion of his motive. To change the theme of praise, he led on Sir Almeric, Lord of Marche, who was present, to repeat his marvellous legends of the war-wolf, and

the love of listening to these wild superstitions soon won the barons from every other subject.

* * * *

The hunt was pursued for the next two days with equal spirit, and still more success against the wolves. The greatest loss sustained by the hunters was in the destruction of several Irish hounds, whose fierce courage had rushed into the *mélée* of the danger ; and these fine animals, scarce even in Ireland, could not be replaced out of that island. However, on the whole, the gallant company were well pleased, and as there had been no appearance of the war, or demon wolf, in merry mood, as the Hungarian wine or rich mead circulated, they bantered the Lord of Marne on his fabulous legends ; and who, it must be confessed, felt rather annoyed that the hunt proceeded without any supernatural enemy to uphold the wonders that he had related, and in which the barons delighted.

It was on the fourth morning, and ere its first dawn had risen above the horizon, that the hunters, who, after a late revel, had

scarcely been an hour at rest, were roused from their repose by an account that an immense horde of the monsters, headed by a demon-wolf, had suddenly rushed down from the forest and attacked a village situated between D'Abeis and D'Evreux. Up started the knights, swift their preparations, and rapidly as their good steeds could bear them, bounding over every impediment, they dashed on to the scene of danger.

By this time the morning light, though still misty, was sufficient to show objects, and the hunters, with surprise and alarm, beheld a confirmation of the Lord of Marche's strange legends of the war-wolf.

Some paces in advance of a number of wolves of the general description was one of gigantic size and ferocity, its gloating eyes wandered round with a look of intelligence and inquiry almost human, its widely extended jaws were smeared by blood, and its long, thin, lolling tongue, red with the same ; and as if aware of its own irresistible strength, it moved onward calmly, but destroying all that crossed its path, now and

then diverging to seize its prey, which it never devoured, but on killing, gave a deep howl, when the other wolves collected to the feast. Probably it had early slaked its hunger with some of the deer with which the forest abounded; but to impute any marvel to natural causes was against the spirit of the times.

Now, of the gallant company of the hunters, Lord Rhodolphe was the freest from superstition. The fate of his father, on the accusation of impossible crimes, had early been impressed on his mind, teaching him to deride such imaginations; and, besides, the Ghibellines were more inclined to be incredulous on points of belief than to embrace them too readily. Thus, as the Bavarian heard the wild fables—and they would fill a volume—by which the demon-wolf was accounted for, and which so intimidated the hunters, that there they stood, not making the least effort to protect the villager, a smile of scorn passed over his features, and he said, emphatically,—

“Noble Sirs, did we rise thus early merely

to contemplate this sad scene, and, forgetful of our manhood, make no efforts to save these poor serfs from a horrible death?"

"We came here," was the reply, "to hunt the wolves. Bavarian, from no natural danger do we of France ever turn aside; but with the powers of darkness we hold no communion; to shun such is our bounden duty." So saying, with few exceptions, the hunters returned to their castles.

"This is most unfortunate," cried Rhodolphe aloud, then turning to Sir Foulque, who still remained, he exclaimed, "Noble sir, your gallantry will not fail in this dread hour. If so, by the Virgin! I can have little trouble at gaining victory in our coming combat. The Saints will not uphold him who neglects the cause of humanity."

"Nor then, or now," exclaimed Foulque, furiously, "shall you, proud Bavarian, rise above me in courage, though it is to fight against a demon. Nay, I would invoke one to my aid if so I could gain Lady Agatha. Mark me, Bavarian, yours she shall never be!"

"And for this uncourteous bravado,"

exclaimed Rhodolphe, indignantly, “I will not only conquer you in battle, but make you bite the dust beneath my horse’s feet. As to the lady’s hand, her wishes, not your violence, shall decide.”

Ere Sir Foulque could reply, a young man, by his dress of the burgher class, but of a comely appearance, and mounted on a heavy horse, came cantering down a rising ground, screaming out at the top of his voice,—

“Sir Hunters, Jesu Maria! in the name of the blessed Mary, strike the rowels deep into your steeds’ flanks, call to your dogs, and hasten up yonder hill to save the good jeweller and his daughter from the ravenous wolves; and in requital, I will grant a figure of St. James of silver,—aye, of pure silver, to be placed on the great altar at Laval. Blessed Saints, I fear it is too late;” and with a shudder he closed his eyes, muttering some words of prayer.

Rhodolphe and Sir Foulque looked towards the direction, and beheld a man supporting a lady on his left arm; in his right, he held

a large, heavy cutlass, as if prepared to ward off the demon-wolf, who stood some paces distant ; seeing which, Rhodolphe exclaimed,—

“ Sir Foulque, this is no time for vain dissension. My varlets, yielding to a blind superstition, have taken off my Irish pack, else I needed not assistance. Happily, your dogs remain ; follow me, then, quickly ; to the rescue ! ”

Even as he spoke, Rhodolphe had dashed up the hill. Sir Foulque was calling to his dogs with full intent to follow, when the burgher, to speed him forward, exclaimed,—

“ Right well, noble sir, shall you be rewarded, if you aid Hubert Clisson and his daughter, Bona ! ”

Thus saying, the young man wept and clenched his hands, but without making any effort to save those he so deeply mourned.

“ Said you Hubert Clisson and his daughter ? ” exclaimed Sir Foulque, reining back his horse.

“ The same, Sir Knight,” answered Paul Deschamps, the burgher.

“ Ha !” thought Sir Foulque, “ they must certainly perish ! A few moments, and I shall be indisputable heir of the D’Evreux possessions ; and be it for weal or be it for woe, I have ever remarked that luck follows on its own track ; thus my fortune being in the ascendant, I shall conquer this boastful Rhodolphe in the combat. Agatha will then be mine ! How the Roturier will rejoice ; and Gaultier, too, my pious uncle !”

Thus reflecting, unappalled, he turned his eyes towards the spot where the jeweller and his daughter stood.

It was nearly on the brow of the hill. At the first onset a wolf, of the common kind, had made a spring at Bona’s palfrey. Overcome with terror, she was falling to the ground, when Hubert, springing from his horse, bounded forward and caught her in his arms. Then a deep howl was uttered by the monster ; the next moment, the horde, collecting round the palfrey, devoured it ere life was quite extinguished ; and now, winding slowly round a planted ravine, ap-

proached the war-wolf with an expression of ferocity which might well be termed demoniacal. Its gloating eyes were fixed on Bona, happily insensible to danger, having fainted on seeing the fate of her palfrey. The agony of the jeweller amounted to frenzy. He laid his fainting daughter on the ground, and though hopeless, stood before her, vainly attempting to strike his cutlass against the war-wolf's impenetrable skin. Strange, the hideous monster made no attack on him, but, with deep howls, prepared to spring on the prostrate form of Bona. Rhodolphe had marked the whole scene. Calling on the Saints for aid, he bounded from his horse, and casting its bridle over a projecting branch, advanced silently; and just as the monster threw himself back to give more force to his spring, by a well-directed aim the knight struck his long hunting-spear through the wide distended jaws, passing it down his throat, thus pinioning back his head. The monster struggled violently.

“Now, jeweller, strike!—Quick! quick!

lustily! Strike! and the maiden shall, through God's assistance, be saved!"

It needed not a second bidding; holding the cutlass between his two hands, Hubert struck,—struck,—struck,—till the head was severed.

"Ho! we have conquered the demon!" said Rhodolphe, scornfully. The jeweller flung himself on his knees in thanksgiving; then rising, said,—

"Noble sir, add to your great kindness, by assisting to place this poor maiden, little accustomed to scenes of violence, on my horse. Holy Virgin! as I live, the brute has fled! Oh, Sir Knight! and the road still infested with monsters! and see, Sir Knight! my arm is lacerated by the demon's claws. She is my only child, and I cannot defend her! Noble sir, have pity!"

"Calm thy fears, jeweller; I will look to her safety. See! my steed shall bear her to the castle of D'Evreux, where this night the hunters meet; there you and she, I promise, shall receive hospitality from its present lord, Sir Foulque."

As he spoke, Hubert, again flinging himself at his feet, and, in a voice of supplication and startling energy, exclaimed,—

“Hear me, Sir Knight! and as this day you have proved your virtue by risking your life to preserve this my daughter, follow up the noble deed, if but for Christ’s sake, to shield her against another, which, if not as fearful, is almost as certain. Hear me, and betray not my confidence! But, no! Bona revives, and these dark truths must not be revealed before her.”

“What requirest thou of me?” demanded Lord Rhodolphe, stooping to raise Bona, who, somewhat revived, threw her arms round Clisson, and sobbing violently, hid her face in his bosom.

“I demand of you to assist me to remove this my child—I have none other—far from this neighbourhood; and if thou requirest gold—as what young Frank does not?—largely shall you be supplied.”

“Nay,” said Lord Rhodolphe, “for acts of gallantry I require no guerdon, but the good I may perform, ever with the assistance

of the blessed Saints ; but you are distraught, Hubert, from excess of terror. What danger fearest thou in the castle of D'Evreux, filled as it now is with the flower of France's chivalry ? Judgest thou of knights and gentlemen by the vile caitiff burgher, who, in the hour of need, deserted you and this fair damsel ? Tush ! he is unworthy of liberty ! Place a collar round the recreant's neck, and treat him as a slave ! ”

“ Hear you that, my father ? ” said Bona, in soft accents.

The knight wished to see the lips that uttered them, but a small hood of dark cloth covered her head and face.

The jeweller's voice was husky from emotion as he remarked,—

“ The high spirit and desperate courage of a knight would as ill befit the burgher as would his armour ; both are useful in their different grades, and without the armourer's skill, little chance, I wot, would the warrior have in battle ; and know, gallant sir, that

I whom you have so nobly assisted belong to the burgher class you so much despise."

A slight expression of scorn played on the features of Rhodolphe, for even his virtue could not rise above the prejudices of patrician pride.

Clisson remarked it, and his brows darkened with a deeper scorn ; but rousing himself to the existing danger, he said aloud,—

" In the name of the blessed Saints ! I swear a great evil attends this maiden if she enters the castle of D'Evreux, or is discovered by its fierce lord. And, see ! there is a stir amongst the hunters ! they have perceived the war-wolf's destruction, and will soon be here in pursuit of the other monsters. Noble sir, as a Christian knight, vowed to assist the oppressed and weak, put forth your strength to save this gentle damsel from destruction ! Kneel to him, Bona ! though he may be obdurate to my entreaties, he cannot reject the supplications of your innocence and youth ! "

So saying, he removed her from his bosom roughly, pushing her forward, still commanding that she should supplicate the knight.

Overcome by terror, exhaustion, and confusion, Bona staggered towards the Knight, but her steps faltered, and she would have fallen, had not Lord Rhodolphe suddenly caught her.

“She faints,” he cried ; “there needeth not to distress the damsel thus, to gain my protection, or win me to the simple kindness of assisting your escape.”

“Rouse you, Bona,” cried the jeweller, in a harsh voice ; “time presses !” he drew her towards him, and pulled off the hood, admitting the air to blow over her face. Revived, she raised her eyes, and met those of Lord Rhodolphe, fixed on her with such intense regard that a deep blush crimsoned her cheeks ; with a sigh, she again turned and leant on Hubert’s shoulder.

“Sir Knight,” cried Hubert, “I hear the clatter of horses’ hoofs,—already they are at the base of the hill ; —we are lost !”

On this Lord Rhodolphe led forth his steed.

“Here, good jeweller,” he said, “this will bear you and this fair maiden swiftly from your apprehended danger. Observe, it requires neither the touch of rowel nor of whip; still, spare it not; but, when you reach your journey’s end, care my steed well, for it was the gift of Louis of Bavaria, now Emperor; and it may be that hereafter I shall claim it from you.”

“And with it,” cried Hubert, “the warmest gratitude; if, indeed, aught ever lies in the power of the humble jeweller to confer on such a noble knight!”

Clisson now mounted; and Lord Rhodolphe, gently raising Bona, placed her behind him. In so doing he felt her heart flutter like a bird’s; her hood was thrown back, and he gazed with rapture on her beauty, illuminated by the bright glow of modesty and confusion which dyed her cheeks. “Pity,” he thought, “that one so incomparable in loveliness should be lowly born—of the burgher class!”

The jeweller was impatient to be off. With dignified respect, as if to a lady of high degree, Rhodolphe pressed the maiden's hand to his lips ; the next moment the fleet steed bore her down the valley, far from his sight. Shortly after, the hunters, satisfied of the demon-wolf's destruction, dashed up the hill, and the wolves were pursued with renewed vigour and success ; and the evening was closing in ere they retired from the hunt to the château of D'Evreux.

While the gallant company proceeded to the gay revel of Sir Foulque's banquet, Rhodolphe, fatigued from the day's exercise, his heart throbbing with a newly-awakened sentiment, which he dared not analyse, also wishing to secure the head of the demon-wolf as a trophy, in place of going to D'Evreux, where he was expected, returned to the spot where he had killed the monster, meaning to preserve its head, but no sign of it was there. Seeing something sparkle, he stooped, and picked up part of a crucifix set with gems. "It must," he thought, "belong to the jeweller's daughter ; as a true

knight, I must seek her out, and restore this." The idea pleased him; and wondering how one of low degree could be so lovely, he returned to his castle, and was gratified at finding Beauvais—then Archbishop of Rheims—had arrived there during his absence.

After some conversation, the Bishop said,—

"Though pressed for time, Rhodolphe, I hastened here, in confidence, to guard you against an union with the Lady Agatha D'Abeis. The exact circumstances of her levity, and which led to the old D'Abeis' testament, I know not; but her castle was marked, and report says that she spent some time with the infidel Jongleurs."

"Thanks," interrupted Rhodolphe, pressing his hand; "were this Agatha beautiful as the jeweller's daughter, and had France for her dowry, I would not wed a damsel of tainted fame. As a knight, good Bishop, even though you had not spoken in confidence, I would pluck out my tongue ere it should lightly speak of a lady's name!"

“I am aware of that, my young friend,” said the prelate; “and now let me guard you against Sir Foulque D’Evreux. As you would not wed Lady Agatha, shall you decline the combat?”

“Decline the combat! a Visconti refuse to meet a foe or rival! It needs no answer. Sir Foulque, they say, is well versed in arms; but I fear him not. The combat now will be compensation for declining the honour of her hand. The Lady Agatha shall have the estate. I wish the defunct Count had not made so whimsical a testament.”

“You cannot thus dispose of the estate; but hereafter we can discuss this point with the *Chef des rats*. Now, listen, Rhodolphe, it is not his weapons of offence that I dread in Sir Foulque, but you, I fear, have unwittingly, or, to speak more correctly, from the lofty sentiment of philanthropy, involved yourself in an adventure. Pray do not interrupt me.

“Expecting to meet you at D’Evreux, where the banquet is held to-night in honour of the hunters, I proceeded there: I cannot spare time to explain how I obtained the

information which alarms me, but depend upon its correctness. It appears, that from some sinister motive, on discovering you had by gallantry saved the life of the jeweller, Hubert Clisson, and his daughter, that Sir Foulque employed his friend, the Roturier, and a party of his retainers, to waylay them, and convey them to the castle of D'Evreux. Happily, they had escaped!"

"Ha! most strange! what can it mean? I do remember the jeweller said, that if his daughter, Bona, I think he called her, went to D'Evreux, a danger worse than to be devoured by the monster-wolf awaited her. Bishop, what can be Foulque's motives? Caitiff! he did not move a step to save the Clissons; yet he is reported brave!" Rhodolphe had spoken with emotion.

"Some evil he plots," cried the Bishop; "and if abetted by his uncle, Gaultier of Longris, O Rhodolphe! then may I shudder at the consequences!"

"This Longris was the chief witness against my noble father!" sadly remarked Rhodolphe.

"This very night," continued the Bishop,

“I was shocked at hearing, that, taking advantage of Sir Almeric’s wild tales of the demon-wolf, Sir Foulque has declared his belief that you conquered the monster by supernatural means. May Christ protect you, my son!”

“I scoff such folly,” scornfully replied Rhodolphe. “An excellent shield to cover the cowardice which permitted Sir Foulque—he who wears golden spurs—to remain tranquilly looking on while beauty was in distress. Pshaw! such folly is beneath contempt.”

“So,” emphatically answered the Bishop, “argued your father—so argued Enguerand Marigni, and what was their fate? I must not reflect on this subject. Still I would awaken you, Rhodolphe, to the necessity of guarding against these reports. Keep in view, my son, one authenticated truth, every age has had, and probably will continue to have, its peculiar madness—a moral disease; and credit my experience, such are still more infectious than those merely corporeal. We are but mocking-birds, imi-

tating the notes we hear. The frenzy of this age is a belief in preternatural powers; and, my son, even though individuals may escape the general taint, still they become involved in its evil consequences. Besides, public opinion, however erroneous, is ever influential."

"And at present it believes in witches and broom-sticks, and finds recreation in *auto-da-fés*. Pshaw! too absurd."

"Absurd in the extreme, but still more unfortunate. When, Rhodolphe, come you to Paris? Another advice, loiter not there, but return to Lady Beatrix. Your lofty, gallant nature despises superstition. But at my age you will learn that we had better glide quietly down a stream which we cannot turn or stop than struggle against its force."

"Within three days," answered Rhodolphe, "I hope to leave this. To-morrow we hunters mean to seek out any loitering wolves difficult to find. Our success has been great, in some degree owing to the monsters' hunger, more powerful than fear

of the dogs ; and I promise my delay in Paris shall be short. Shall I meet you there, good Bishop ?”

“ No ; I depart for Rheims to-morrow at early dawn ; and now, Rhodolphe, I have a request to make, one in which I feel a sincere interest.”

“ You have but to make it, and if within the compass of my power it is granted.”

“ I demand your friendship for a youth, by name Chretien, and at present the pupil of the Père Lagravare. The youth is endeared by a sad memory, and resided with me until my translation to Rheims. Then, as his health was delicate, and my time too much engrossed by sacred duties to attend to Chretien, I placed him under the care of Père Lagravare, with whom he was previously acquainted. He is a noble-minded youth, pious to enthusiasm ; be as a brother to him, Rhodolphe, for it is my intention, within a few months, it may be weeks, to place him under the guardianship of your angelic parent, Dame Beatrix, and your friendship will reconcile his timid, lonely nature to

absence from the Père and from me—his sole earthly friends. And keep in mind that Chretien is devoted to the Church—to be the minister of Christ."

"Most willingly shall I extend my friendship to the youth," cried Rhodolphe. Pleading fatigue, the primate then retired, and at early morning, ere Rhodolphe arose, departed from the Château D'Abeis.

CHAPTER V.

“ No titled birth had he to boast—
Son of the desert, Fortune’s child,
Yet not by frowning Fortune crossed,
The Muses on his cradle smiled.”

DERMODY.

FOR several days Philip had experienced the liveliest anxiety to receive accounts of the success of the hunters. At length his mind was relieved by an express forwarded to him, by his primate announcing that the wolves were exterminated ; also that, owing to the manly exertions and unbounded liberality of the Bavarian knight, hamlets were being erected on a scale superior to those which the serfs had burned as a temporary protection against the incursions of the monsters ; and that the northern barons, inspired by a noble emulation, gave every assistance to the goodly work. The primate

added, that on the following day the gallant company of the hunters proposed entering Paris, to lay their spoils at his Majesty's feet, regretting that he would be deprived of the pleasure of accompanying them, being obliged to return to Rheims.

Solicitous to pay every honour to the Bavarian, also to display his gratitude to the northern barons for their ready obedience to his will, Philip ordered a magnificent banquet to be prepared at the Louvre for their entertainment, and to which he invited all the aristocracy of Paris, and the evening's amusement was to conclude with a masque, given by her Majesty; and, as she justly considered Agatha D'Abeis as the most talented of her attending damsels, she requested her to preside over its arrangement, and, in all preparations, to exceed the magnificence of Isabella of England's far-boasted splendour; for Jane D'Artois, from earliest youth, had nourished a secret jealousy of Isabella's superior beauty, and, while she loudly condemned her levity, strove to imitate her manners.

We have already detailed the circumstance of Agatha having resorted to the encampment of the Jongleurs with intent to learn her future destiny. It was a knowledge of this which had influenced the old Lord of D'Abeis to dispose in so whimsical a manner of his vast estates and his niece's hand, without consulting her inclinations : the indelicacy of awarding her to the victor of a private combat almost wrought Agatha's mind to madness. In early youth, Agatha had accompanied Isabella of France to England, and had been influenced by her royal mistress's example to rush into scenes of wild and wilful indiscretion ; even so Agatha was proud to excess, and her mind imbued with the romance of chivalry. The following circumstances rendered the position in which she was thus placed still more distressing and embarrassing.

The uncourtly manners of Sir Foulque inspired Agatha with aversion ; on the other hand, the deeds of Lord Rhodolphe, proclaimed throughout the land, united to his noble bearing, admitted by all, and the

interest attached to him as being the son of Guy D'Auvergne, awakened in her feelings of admiration, which nearly amounted to passion, even though its object had never been seen ; and this devotion for the unknown knight for years rendered her insensible to the love of many a gallant baron. But of late a new sentiment had been awakened in her bosom, conquering the imaginary fancy for the Bavarian, whose existence was nearly forgotten, until revived by the Count D'Abeis' testament, then her aversion to Sir Foulque, and dread, lest the Bavarian should reject her hand, directed all her hopes to gaining his affection. But even this hope, flattering as it appeared, could not crush in her bosom the newly awakened sentiment to which we have alluded, and which it is necessary to detail in full.

Chretien, he whom the primate had recommended to Rhodolphe's friendship, was a youth, known in Paris for the last twelve months, or thereabouts, as the pupil of the Père Lagravare, with whom he resided in

the wood of Vincennes. His appearance had awakened curiosity and inquiry ; to the latter the Père answered, that Chretien had been committed to his care, for the purpose of being instructed in his religious duties, by the Bishop of Beauvais, on his being exalted to the primacy. These answers led to a belief that the youth was the son of Enguerand Marigni, for it was known that some of the ill-fated Minister's children had escaped from the destruction to which, through the arts of Charles de Valois, they had been doomed. Two of them alone had perished.

Chretien, whose novitiate was to commence within a few months, devoted his leisure hours to the cultivation of flowers and herbs, or in extracting from them the most exquisite perfume and healthful medicines. Beneath his fostering care flourished many shrubs and plants, before unknown to France, among which were the far-boasted roses of Sharon, the lilies of Damascus, and the many-coloured anemones of Byzantium. Philip, who admitted the general opinion that

Chretien was the son of Marigni, and who much esteemed the Minister's memory, invited him to reside at the Louvre. To this the Père presumed to object,—the youth, he argued, was of delicate health, his habits solitary, his religious observances imperative. Philip yielded to the pious objections; but, being pleased with Chretien, to secure his visits, commanded that he should once in the week supply her Majesty with flowers and perfumes, the request was granted; and, as by this means, the King frequently conversed with the youth, he was so captivated by the enthusiasm, purity, and loftiness of his sentiments, that he communicated to Francesco D'Esculo his resolve of obliging the primate to acknowledge him as his nephew, when, in the face of all France, he would reinstate him in the estates of Enguerand Marigni which, at the period of the Minister's execution, had devolved to the Crown.

D'Esculo ever listened to these plans with cold downcast eyes, sometimes observing that there were no proofs of Chretien being the son of Enguerand Marigni, that

evidently some mystery hung about the youth. And the friar humbly expressed to his Majesty the propriety of permitting Chretien to pursue his studies, without directing his mind towards prospects of worldly grandeur, which he might never attain ; and Philip so far consented, that he promised not to acquaint Chretien with his generous intentions until he had an opportunity of first consulting the primate, and of obtaining his confidence and consent.

Meantime Chretien pursued his course with the energy of one exalted and inspired by religious enthusiasm. In vain the Père strove, by reasoning, to calm down a fervour, originating as much in imagination as principle ; and this great failing in his pupil's character had been pointed out by the primate. Yet, to all others, the youth's enthusiasm seemed an emanation of heaven ; for, whether Chretien gazed on the starry firmament, long his favourite study, or guarded the tender plants of a more genial climate from the nipping frosts, his thoughts

dwelt upon his Redeemer, intermingling his idea with every action, and for love of Christ he devoted a part of every day to the relieving of sickness and sorrow. At early morning the enthusiast might be seen entering the houses of the afflicted, bearing baskets, filled with cordials and medicine, ministering to their wants. As he thus glided on in his work of benevolence, he was received as an angel of mercy, with healing on his wings ; and the interest he awakened was increased by the beauty and harmony of his countenance, shaded by a deep melancholy : his form, which seemingly was out-growing its strength, foretold premature decay, awakening sympathy.

By the Queen and her ladies Chretien's flowers were received with delight. Moreover, his rosebuds of Jericho, which, when placed in crystal vases of pure water, suddenly burst forth amidst their leaves of brilliant green into full bloom, shedding a rich perfume around, they were hailed as fairy gifts. More precious still was deemed the balm extracted from the roses' stems,

used by holy men for sacred purposes, and by the Père Lagravare and other physicians, as being potent in removing the painful excitement of the nerves.

Saturday evenings were those appointed for Chretien to convey Oriental blossoms to the Queen's apartments. There he seldom loitered, for after the first burst of curiosity which he had excited, her Majesty or the attending ladies rarely deigned to notice his presence ; so, quickly retiring, he hastened to pay his devoirs to Philip, who ever greeted him with friendly courtesy. These duties over—such Chretien deemed them—he gladly hastened away to his simple and sublime studies—the works of his Creator.

Months of the period fixed for his stay with the Père Lagravare had rolled on in this manner, when the following circumstance changed the whole nature of Chretien's feelings, impelling him forward to a destiny so strange and unparalleled as to awaken the indignation of the Empire, and to have France threatened with the fearful anathema of excommunication.

One evening as the youth returned from the Louvre he was overtaken by a violent storm. Agatha D'Abeis chanced at the time to be in the same avenue. At once recognising him as the King's favourite, from a sudden impulse she ran forward and flung her mantle over his shoulder, closing its gemmed clasp round the throat of the surprised youth, who, dazzled by her beauty and embarrassed at such condescension, vainly essayed to speak.

"Nay ; no thanks, no thanks," said the volatile Agatha ; "the storm is increasing and your home is distant, whereas a few moments will bring me to the palace ; and see, if this simple kindness claims a return, you can repay it in the morning with some of your Oriental flowers and rich perfumes." Saying these words she disappeared, leaving the wondering boy amazed, enraptured, enchanted.

We presume not to trace the first transports of passion in the youthful breast. From that hour a change passed over Chretien's spirit. Truly Love had cast

the spell of its enchantment around him, awakening sensations and sympathies at once new, delightful, and, in their effects, mysterious ; and without an effort the unsophisticated youth yielded to a passion ecstatic and pure as his exalted nature, but intense and devoted beyond the comprehension of the many ; few, very few have ever truly loved with such truthfulness and self-abandonment. Alas ! for Chretien, struggling to be a Christian in spirit as in name !

And now as he pursued his way through the wood of Vincennes his thoughts ran thus :—“ Do I suffer under some illusion of my fancy ? It cannot be that Lady Agatha, celebrated for her incomparable beauty, can have deigned to guard me from the storm ! Strange, oh ! strange that until this evening, though I have so often seen her in the Queen’s presence, she inspired me with none of these rapturous emotions ! ”

Light were Chretien’s steps as he thus proceeded, his eyes sparkling, his countenance no longer sad, but smiling and glowing with an unknown joy ; the terrible

memories of the past, which had so long depressed his spirits, seemed effaced by the glorious light which love darted through his soul.

In this tumult of delight he reached the Père's, but shunning observation, and forgetting that his plants torn by the storm required care, he fled to his apartment to worship in spirit the IDOL he had so hastily enshrined within his heart, trembling lest any should penetrate its sanctuary.

Chretien at midnight, as was his wont, knelt before the image of his crucified Redeemer, but the form of Agatha rose between him and the true God ; and on the following morning, as he culled his rarest flowers as an offering to be laid on the Madonna's shrine, he selected the most fragrant for Lady Agatha ; then, still kneeling, in a voice of exceeding depth and sweetness he chaunted a morning hymn to the Virgin.

CHAPTER VI.

“Light of my soul, far dearer than the day—
Me all the bliss of earth could ill repay
For thy sweet, divine society :
To thee again with rapture will I fly.”

MRS. TIGHE’s *Psyche*.

ON throwing her mantle over Chretien to protect him from the rain, Agatha thought no more of a matter so insignificant, until she found Chretien, on the following morning, waiting for her in a corridor leading to the Queen’s apartments, when, throwing himself on his knees and pressing the hallowed earth she trod upon with his glowing lips, with graceful accents he returned the mantle. A basket of flowers rested near.

Surprised at his emotion, and struck by the harmony of his features, a momentary

tenderness crossed her bosom, and she softly said,—

“ Nay, Chretien, the mantle is yours.”

“ You would not,” he interrupted, with emotion, “ deign to wear that which had covered my unworthy person. It were presumption to expect it !”

Gaily she encompassed herself in its folds, exclaiming,—

“ For the next three days, to disprove your words, I shall wear this ; then, Chretien, the mantle shall be yours. One condition is annexed. Whenever the rain falls, you must, for my sake, wear it ; and these flowers are for me,” she cried, raising the basket. “ Nay, no thanks,” for the enamoured youth poured forth a rhapsody of gratitude. “ And now farewell. I hasten to her Majesty !”

Three days after this, and the reckless Agatha proceeded to the wood of Vincennes, and meeting Chretien some distance from the Père’s, presented the mantle. It proved to him the cloak of destiny, as from thenceforth his whole being concentrated in Agatha.

His passion must have amounted to intoxication, banishing reflection, else he would have remembered that an insuperable barrier rose between him and his love. So intense, so abject was his devotion, that night after night, stealing from his couch, he would rush towards the Louvre, and stand for hours gazing on the light which shone from Agatha's bower, offering up prayers for her happiness, forgetful of those for his own wandering soul.

So absorbed was Chretien by this newly-awakened sentiment, that he lost all control over his feelings ; thus the Queen and her ladies discovered his secret, and being much amused, in mere sport urged on Agatha to encourage his addresses.

Weeks passed on thus. Chretien, for the last ten days, had absented himself from the palace ; and then came the news that he was ill, pining away, the Père said, under some unknown disease. Sincere was the anxiety of Philip for his young favourite, and bitter the pang which shot through the heart of the reckless Agatha, as she felt

conscious that unrequited passion was the source of his decline ; and again obeying the impulse of the moment, knowing that the Père, whose observation she dreaded, was absent, she hastened to Vincennes to see Chretien, and afford him some consolation. Now, the reader must bear in mind that, though not before mentioned, these events occurred previous to the death of the Baron D'Abeis, and while Agatha still considered herself as heiress to one of the largest fiefs in France ; for she never anticipated that the Baron, her uncle, would carry his resentment, for her visit to the Jongleurs, beyond the grave.

On reaching the Père's residence, Agatha found Chretien engaged in a parterre of his choicest plants. Though looking pale and thin, his manner was composed, and he received her with less emotion than usual. After entering into inquiries relative to his health, and assisting to hold the branches he was fastening up, in a tone of tenderness, for she was affected by the sadness which pervaded his countenance, she said,—

“ Chretien, I came here this evening, for probably I may not again see you for some time, as an express has arrived from Mayenne to announce the approaching demise of my kinsman, Baron D’Abeis. Soon as the event takes place, as his heiress, I must hasten to his castle. Now mark me, Chretien ! within a few months I shall go to Palestine, and there you shall accompany me as squire. In that glorious clime, if minstrels sing true, you will find a thousand plants, delicate and sweet as those you so prize. Nay, Chretien, why this start, and that look of wild dismay ? What is there so terrible in my intention ? Have not millions quitted country, home, friends, to tread on holy ground ? and why should not I, else would my wealth seem useless ? But I see how it is, you are ignorant of the use of arms ; so light and graceful in form, a few weeks will instruct you. That be my care. You shall be instructed by the best masters in Paris.”

“ No, lady, no ! but—but—the mention of Palestine brought back such memories,”

he groaned aloud, covering his face with his spread hands.

“What memories?” cried Agatha; but he fixed his eyes on the ground, compressing his lips.

“Chretien,” she said, playfully, “I see how it is; you thought me impious in wooing one destined to Mother Church, to cast aside his cross and act as a lady’s gay squire. Well, look not so sad, when I take my high seat as lady paramount of D’Abeis, then shall I appoint you my confessor. Does the grave office suit your dignity?”

He made an effort to meet her gay humour; it was vain. Turning away, he moved forward; she followed, saying,—

“Then as you reject all my favours, remain here amidst your flowers; many a gallant youth, I wot, will sue to accompany me to blessed Palestine.”

“Lady,” he replied, “when you are gone, there will be no blossom on earth for me; but happily my soul, which you are winning from heaven, may return to its Creator. Grant it, blessed Saints!” he ex-

claimed with enthusiasm, and clasping his hands together in an attitude of devotion.

“What means such presumption?” she replied, in anger. “In offering to appoint you my squire, I merely joked; I would not, if I could, win you from your holy profession.”

He grasped her wrist with violence, as in choking accents he cried,—

“I mean that you have cast a spell around me. Until I knew you, my aspirations were after heaven, and hopes of a blessed eternity supported my spirit under griefs of the most harrowing nature; but since the fatal evening you first addressed me, evil thoughts have assailed me, and your image alone pervades my breast. I can no longer identify myself with the past, and when I turn to the future, dark and horrible shadows rise up between me and the resplendent glories on which for the last three years my soul so rapturously dwelt. Leave me then, thou tempter in woman’s form, and increase not my struggles by your presence.”

Agatha shuddered at his words, and at the expression of his countenance, at once so stern and gloomy; how bitterly at that moment she regretted the weak vanity which had urged her on to win the affections of one so ardent and sincere, and in subdued accents, she said,—

“Blessed Virgin, have mercy on me, if I have unconsciously stood between you and holier aspirations; and now, Chretien, ere we part, for I shall not again disturb you with my presence, grant me one favour.”

These words, addressed in tenderness, conquered the neophyte’s pious resolve to immolate his passion to the loftier calls of religion. Flinging himself on his knees before her, he exclaimed,—

“On this,” and he kissed his crucifix, “I swear to obey your commands; aye, though you consign me to a painful, lingering death.”

“You are too vehement, Chretien, and too figurative in your speech,” she answered, gravely; “such language terrifies and saddens me. Speak not of death; it is to

preserve your life I make my request. Know that I have discovered with regret your wild habit of spending hours gazing at the bower where I rest oft tranquilly, and you exposed to the night's unwholesome dews. Now, mark me, it is reported that of late a spirit of darkness has been seen after the midnight hour wandering through the wood of Vincennes. Nay, smile not so incredulously. A Dominican Friar, who saw the apparition, if such it be, has reported the fact to the King. Promise then, Chretien, to seek your couch at night, and to wander no more in this lonely manner."

Chretien promised, and then accompanied her, until in the distance they saw the Père approaching, upon which, dreading discovery, they parted. Agatha secretly resolved to avoid for the future the impassioned youth; yet the resolve was accompanied by a sentiment of regret she did not dare to analyse.

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A few weeks after this interview with Chretien, the Count D'Abeis died, and with

indignation Agatha learned of his extraordinary testament. To soothe her disappointment, the Queen, Jane D'Artois, generously confided to her knowledge the circumstance of Chretien being the son of Enguerand Marigni, and that Philip purposed restoring to him the vast possessions of his father, and which had been confiscated to the crown. After this came on the wolf-hunting, and on their destruction, the success being imputed to Rhodolphe, every voice rose in his praise. This roused up the expiring flames of Agatha's fanciful, romantic love. Rhodolphe was, with his good sword, to dispute with a rival the possession of her hand. An union with one so distinguished would gratify all the wishes of her vain heart, so Agatha resolved to forget the devoted, enthusiastic youth, in whose breast she had awakened the first sentiment of a passionate, devoted love.

CHAPTER VII.

“ Had I a tongue in eloquence as rich
As is the colouring in Fancy’s loom,
’Twere all too poor to utter the least part
Of that enchantment.”—DARBY’S *Paradise*.

IT was evening, and on the following day the hunters were to enter Paris; and from the Parisians’ love of pageantry the whole city was in a state of excitement at the prospect of such a gallant show.

The Queen having expressed a wish for some of Chretien’s rare flowers, Agatha offered to procure them, and, not sorry once more to have an opportunity of seeing Chretien, slowly wended her way to the Père Lagravare’s.

Lost in reflections on her altered prospects she observed not the splendid effect of the declining sun, as its glorious rays sported

on the surface of a stream by whose windings she pursued her path, or, piercing through the embowering trees, lighted up the broad meadows which here and there intersected the wood. Indeed, in her happiest mood Agatha was indifferent to the beauties of Nature ; her delight was in the baronial halls, where masques and dancing, deep wassailing and gay revelry, reigned ; the minstrelsy, which loudly celebrated the victor's glory, or, in sadder measure, recorded the warriors' death, was far dearer to her than the lark's matin song, or the soft vesper hymn of the nightingale. As she thus sped listlessly, she was suddenly startled by seeing a figure standing in the centre of a small glade, and which opened into several foot-paths cut through the wood.

The form which attracted Agatha was calculated to command admiration. It was a maiden in the first bloom of youth, and of such extraordinary beauty as seldom adorns the earth. Her dress was simple ; a robe of fine linen, of a delicate blue colour, fastened round the waist by a silver cestus ;

there was no border to the dress ; her hair of raven blackness fell carelessly from her uplifted face, for her head was thrown back as her eyes of deepest blue were fixed on a bird which poised itself in air.

“Blessed Virgin !” thought Agatha, “surely this being of loveliness cannot be the evil spirit said to haunt the wood, and yet I have heard of such assuming, for wicked purposes, forms of angelic beauty.” At that instant the maiden uttered a cry ; Agatha looked up and beheld her own favourite gos-hawk dart at a lark which poised itself high in air ; a moment, and the gay bird fell to the earth, while Agatha, holding up her wrist, shouting and calling out “pieus purs,” instantly the well-trained hawk, jingling its bell, obeyed her call.

“My lark is dead !” said the strange maiden, sadly, as she gently raised the bird.

“I regret that my falcon, which some way must have escaped its perch, has caused this accident,” said Agatha, in a cold, proud

tone, “but its place shall be supplied from the royal aviary.”

“Thanks, lady,” was the reply; “but I reared this lark, and loved it, thus no other could supply its place.”

She was retiring some paces, when, in a tone of command, Agatha called her back, exclaiming,—

“Damsel, who are you that wander alone at this hour through a wood said to be the haunt of evil spirits?”

“Lady, I was not alone,” she replied; “my father accompanied me so far, but having to consult with the Père Lagravare, he desired me to tarry here until his return. Foolishly, to amuse the time, I gave liberty to the lark, which ever returned at my call;” she stopped, for tears started to her eyes.

“Your name?” demanded Agatha.

“Bona, daughter to the jeweller, Hubert Clisson, noble lady!”

“How know you that I am noble?” proudly demanded Agatha.

“Lady, I judge it by the broad border which surrounds your robe, and the richly gemmed cincture which confines your delicate waist,” replied Bona.

“Bona Clisson a jeweller’s daughter,” muttered Agatha to herself. “Ha! now I remember, Philip confided to his Queen that such a person might demand her protection. Blessed Virgin! if once received at the Louvre, how the beauties of the court will pale and wither before such loveliness; nay, should Rhodolphe, the Bavarian, see this incomparable maiden, he may forget the nobility of rank, the honour of knighthood, and, rejecting my hand so painfully bequeathed to him, give her a preference and thus degrade me. This must not be; already am I sufficiently humiliated.” Here a new fancy rose. “Ha! Chretien, it may be, loves this Bona!” the idea was painful.

In haughty, commanding accents she then said,—

“Maiden, your father has gone to the Père Lagravare’s, and you tarry here till Chretien, his pupil, approaches? Mark

your presumption ! You, the daughter of an artisan, to cast your thoughts on Chretien, descended from the proudest barons of Normandy,—but it may be that you are ignorant of his rank ? ”

The countenance of Bona glowed with angry indignation at this coarse accusation, and in accents, proud as Agatha’s, she replied,—

“ Lady, you mistake ; from motives unknown to me, I have never been allowed even to see this Chretien, esteemed so highly by all. As to his parentage, be it ever so noble, I cast my ancestry as high ; for know, though my father be but an artisan, my mother, a D’Evreux, was of the royal blood of France ! ” she paused, clasped her hands, tears rolled down her face as she added, “ Alas for me ! it is an idle boast ; my father, in his sternness, eschews, hates the nobles, and my lot is to be fixed with the lowly in birth, the mean in spirit,” she thought, but uttered not the last words.

“ Ha ! ” thought Agatha, “ she boasts that by her mother’s side she is a D’Evreux ;

and by this declaration I know her whole story. Once under our Queen's protection she will gain on her affections ; in all things this incomparable beauty would prove a rival. I must see to this. I will win her confidence, and so guide her to my purpose.” Turning to Bona, she observed,—

“ Maiden, I would, in despite of our different positions, cultivate your acquaintance. Meet me, then, here to-morrow evening. Observe, after the vesper hour.”

“ Lady, except at the hour of prayer I seldom leave home ; but here comes my father, to him make your request.”

On the instant Hubert Clisson approached,—his person was more robust, and his countenance still sterner, than when at Montfaucon he had acted as Edrid’s executioner.

With the presumption of a superior, Agatha expressed her wish, or rather command, of forming Bona’s acquaintance. Clisson roughly replied, in abrupt accents,—

“ My daughter mixes not with those of high degree, proud lady !”

“ And wherefore,” haughtily demanded Agatha, “ if such deign to receive her ? ”

“ Because,” answered the jeweller bitterly, “ I despise them ; and sooner—all dear as Bona is to me—would I see this my only child wrapped in her grave-clothes, than have her brows encircled with a coronet,—symbol of pride and selfishness ; and to this vainglory, if seen, her beauty might exalt her.”

Agatha cast a disdainful look on the jeweller ; this irritated him ; and, with uncourteous vehemence, he added,—

“ Lady, I know you, and it were contamination to the purity of this maiden to seek friendship with one obliged to fly from Mayenne to escape the consequence of her levities, and, if I have heard aright in strange company, too ; besides, short time, and this, my child, will be wedded to an humble artisan, fittest mate for Clisson’s daughter.”

With these words, roughly drawing forward Bona, whose tears fell rapidly down her face, Hubert hurried away ; little wish had Agatha to detain them. Shocked at

the jeweller's knowledge of her former levity,—terrified at the idea of his betraying it to Philip,—gladly would she have banished him from the kingdom. She now hastened on her way, hoping that Chretien might give some account of the Clissons and of their probable stay in Paris.

About a hundred yards from the Père's residence was a blasted elm, surrounded by a rustic seat, sheltered by the wood, except, at the western side, which commanded an extensive view of the adjacent country. It was a curious tree, that ancient elm ; its trunk, hollowed by time, had been nearly raised by a storm which came sweeping from the west ; thus one-half of its roots were uplifted, and, pale and withered, stood forth in fantastic and full relief against the rich green of the verdant turf ; and of an evening the birds loved to gather on the withered skeleton fibres, warbling forth their vesper notes ; while the toad, the black snail, and the earth-worm, battened on the rich soil which lay beneath the vegetating side of the elm. And in his wild imaginings

Chretien fancied the tree illustrative of life and death : how much of what was corrupt and loathsome flourished beneath the rich verdure of the former ; while the latter was purified by the glorious light of heaven, and enlivened by the notes of peace and love. And in defiance of the Père's command, that he should never raise his voice in singing, as he sat beneath the elm, often would it burst forth into a hymn of seraphic harmony.

On leaving the Clissons, Agatha hurried on to the elm and beheld Chretien, his uncovered head reclining against the withered fibres. He slept, and she gazed with admiration on the perfection of his finely-chiselled features, pale as marble, and wearing an expression of profound sadness and of decision, strange in one so young. And with the caprice and levity which marked her character, she felt a yearning of tenderness towards him. Bending forward, she cried,—

“ Rise, Chretien ! — your hair,” she passed her fingers through it, “ is already moist from the unwholesome dews ! Rise ! I would speak to you !”

He startled, gazed at her, then, with a sigh, again closed his eyes.

She clasped his hand, exclaiming,—

“Rise, I entreat, dear Chretien! for we may not again meet, at least, for long, and I have much to say.”

He sprang from his recumbent posture, flung himself at her feet, entwined his arms around her knees rapturously, exclaiming,—

“Oh! call me DEAR again! It is joy—transport—to be thus termed by you!”

She dashed him off, haughtily exclaiming,—

“This is presumption! I came, by the Queen’s command, for flowers, to adorn her bower, and for that purpose alone aroused you.”

In a moment Chretien stood upright before her, but spoke not, merely pointing to a basket of flowers and perfumes. With all her boldness, Agatha was abashed, for she felt the necessity of explaining her present position; aware of the intensity of Chretien’s passion, also, in the calculations of selfishness, remembering that, in the event

of Lord Rhodolphe not seeking her hand, the heir of Enguerand Marigni would be worthy her acceptance, in terms of soothing gentleness she entered into a detail of D'Abeis' death, and strange disposal of her hand, concluding by saying,—

“Lord Rhodolphe, the Bavarian, I have never seen, and Sir Foulque I loathe and abhor!”

It was some time ere Chretien could command composure to answer her; he then said, sadly,—

“Lady, why should I grieve? my quickly-fading health foretells that my sojourn on earth may not be long; and know, that ere we met an impassable gulf sunk between us! Agatha, you little suspect what a wretched outcast you have deigned to notice. And oh! may the terrible truth never reach your knowledge!”

He paused. After a time, in extreme agitation, proceeded,—

“Shortly, Agatha, the Primate is expected in Paris, and I am to accompany him back to Rheims, then to be professed a

a minister of Christ. "Oh!" he exclaimed, wildly tossing his arms towards heaven, "how unworthy have I not proved of the blessed vocation! Great,—unspeakably great, is the mercy which thus again will open to my view the hopes of salvation. Sinner as I have been proved, for yielding to human passion — to woman's influence—have I not turned aside from the true God to worship in you, Agatha, a creature of clay like unto myself?" He paused, alarmed by a rustling amidst the trees which shaded the back of the old elm, but it had ceased.

Agatha, terrified at his energy, his glowing cheeks, and sparkling eyes, resolved to shorten their interview, and in a tone which betrayed displeasure, said,—

"Chretien, you are too enthusiastic! you terrify me! we must part!"

He knelt before her in the delirium of a passion which, in its excess, conquered his holier aspirations, in broken accents exclaiming,—

"Agatha, you are bequeathed to another,—Lord Rhodolphe will claim you as his bride;—I will be forgotten, it may be,

scorned : wherefore, then, should I wish to live ? ” he groaned in despair.

Assuming a grave accent, she replied,—

“ Chretien, you have often said that impassable barriers were between us, still refusing to explain the mystery. To-morrow the hunters enter Paris ; so, until after the combat fixed by my uncle’s strange testament takes place, we cannot meet again, and by that time, if I mistake not, you go to Rheims. Philip, I know, expects the Primate.”

He made no reply ; such mournful silence subdued Agatha far more than his vehemence. “ I will not depart,” she thought, “ without the power of recalling him, poor youth, at pleasure.”

“ Dear Chretien,” she said aloud, “ will you grant me a request ? ”

“ Only again call me dear Chretien,” he exclaimed, with an emotion he no longer attempted to control, “ and though it were to rush among the devouring wolves, I swear, by Him who rules the earth, to obey you ! ”

“ Your vehemence,” she sadly replied, “ gives importance to matters else of no

importance ; I merely wish to make an arrangement by which we may again meet, should such be our pleasure.”

“ Command me, I obey !” he cried.

She handed him a ring, saying,—

“ Observe this gem attentively ; it is an onyx of four zones, two white and two lilac, engraved with a head of Herodias, and, if one may judge from the impression, she was exquisitely beautiful ; well, this antique is the most prized heirloom in the family of D’Abeis,—Philip says he would purchase it with the largest fief in France,—but this is not to my purpose,—say, would you know it again ?”

“ Of necessity,” he replied ; “ it is remarkable in its richness and extreme antiquity ; besides, I could never forget anything, however trivial, connected with you.”

“ Well, then, as, until my fate is decided, I could not alone visit you, Chretien, and yet it may be that I would wish to see you, or, more probable still, require the services of so true a friend, promise that you will, on seeing this token, grant any request that .

may accompany it. Above all, remember that to me alone the gem is to be returned,—to no other hand must you intrust this valued heirloom. Do you promise?"

Prostrating himself before her, he emphatically vowed that, should her request doom him to the most painful death, he would unhesitatingly to the letter obey her request; then pressing the onyx to his lips, he returned it, and arose from his kneeling attitude, having first kissed his crucifix to ratify the oath.

Shocked at his energy, she gravely replied,—

"Chretien, your enthusiasm terrifies, and, far from awakening sympathy, renders our interviews distressing and distasteful. I make a simple request, merely to ensure the possibility of our meeting at pleasure, and you burst forth into a rhapsody of frantic promises of a heroic sacrifice, such as by no possibility can ever be required.—But, hush! hush! see, some one has been crouching in the clump of acacia-trees! see to it."

Chretien rushed forward, looking anx-

iously around. He soon returned, observing,—

“Some one there must have been, for I saw the shadow; but the person had disappeared. It seems strange. However, it matters not, Lady; for by no possibility could our persons have been recognised, even if our speech was overheard.”

“Can there really be an evil spirit haunting these woods?” she said, musingly; then hurried on to the Louvre, in a state of extreme terror. Chretien accompanied her. Arrived within view of the palace, she said,—

“Now we part: but, Chretien, be careful of your health. Here, again observe the ring.” She put forth her hand; enraptured, he pressed it to his glowing lips, then falling on his knees, in an ecstasy bordering on frenzy, kissed the ground on which Agatha stood, and so continued until she disappeared from view; when, rising, he mournfully wended his way back to the Père’s solitary home.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ When pleasure sparkles in the cup of youth,
And the gay hours on downy wing advance,
Oh then, 'tis sweet to hear the lip of truth
Breathe the soft vows of love, sweet to entrance
The raptured soul by intermingling glance
Of mutual bliss.”

PHILIP, to display his admiration of the Bavarian's gallantry and benevolence in relieving his subjects from the devouring wolves, commanded that the gate of St. Denis should be thrown open for the hunters' admittance, and the Oriflamme brought forward ; — regal honours never before paid to a subject. Thus the hunters entered the city like conquerors.

First in advance were twelve heralds, mounted on milk-white steeds, superbly caparisoned. They were followed by numerous squires, gallantly waving around

their knights' proudly emblazoned pennons. Immediately after rode Rhodolphe, and upwards of two hundred barons and knights clad in full armour, or in hunter's fashion, as their fancy dictated. And now, more slowly, advanced a number of criminals, who came to claim Philip's promise of commuting their crimes. These rude men were clad in strange fashion, being covered with the spoils of the wolves; each elevating on a long spear a grim head of their devouring enemy, their own countenances being, if possible, still more ferocious and repulsive.

Preceded by bands of music, accompanied by his barons, and surrounded by a numerous company of Cordeliers, Philip rode to the gate of St. Denis to meet the gallant company, and was received by every outward demonstration of loyalty, loudly re-echoed by the vast multitude who had collected to witness the scene. Then, on a given signal, the hunters fell back, leaving a wide space open, into which the criminals were driven; when the King and his prelates, advancing towards them with much

solemnity, acquitted them of their past offences, after which money and provisions were dealt out with no sparing hand ; and then a herald rode forward and commanded them, on the instant, to quit Paris and return to their northern homes. Woe to any who dared to loiter !

As Rhodolphe accompanied Philip to the Louvre, he requested a private audience. It was granted, and his Majesty led him to the Tapestry Chamber. Now, although the negotiations with which Rhodolphe was intrusted by the Emperor to carry on with Philip were of the gravest consequence to the State,—moreover, were connected with the restoration of Dante to Italy, after his long exile from Florence,—still, being no way connected with our history, we pass them over as irrelevant.

Philip and the Bavarian were still engrossed with their political business, when the silver horn outside was gently sounded ; it was followed by the entrance of Chretien, as usual bearing a basket of flowers and essences.

“Your Majesty summoned me here,” he said, respectfully advancing towards him.

“Yes, Chretien, I would introduce you to this noble stranger, whose gallantry and benevolence justly endear him to France.”

Ere Philip finished the sentence, Rhodolphe, pleased with the youth’s noble appearance, rendered still more interesting by the white and simple robe of a novice, which he that evening wore, stepped forward, and embracing him with vivacity, exclaimed,—

“Know, Chretien, our good primate commended you to my notice; it is his pleasure that a brotherly affection should spring up between us; for me I already experience towards you a tender sympathy, such as I have never before admitted for any stranger; let me hope the sentiment is mutual.”

Chretien, who in Rhodolphe only saw the destined lover of Agatha, far from meeting his embrace, drew back with a shudder; observing which, the King exclaimed,—

"Ha, Chretien! how is this? Why not meet the noble Bavarian's advances in friendship? He honours you, foolish youth."

"Your Majesty," he answered, with an emotion he could not control, "my path in life is shaped with the condemned, the lowly, and afflicted; not with vaunted heroes, glittering in silken sheen and sparkling jewels, Pride's vain trappings. I feel no friendship for this knight, I proffer him none. Fallen as I am, I stoop not to hypocrisy, and with this Bavarian will hold no fellowship!"

Surprised at his vehemence, Philip mildly said, but displeasure darkened his brow,—

"Nay, Chretien, with this novitiate robe, you assert an unnatural austerity. You should not have assumed the dress until the primate's arrival, now delayed for some days, it may be weeks. But this garment," and he touched it, "is of little import. Now mark me! let no false pride teach you to shun the Lord Rhodolphe's proffered friendship. Soon, and you shall meet him as an equal; for, by my soul's weal, Chretien,

will I do you justice! Philip of France swears it! Thus I pledge my word!" He grasped his hand.

"Justice!" reiterated Chretien, in a thrilling tone. "Say you justice? Would that I had not so long escaped its stern decree! Would that I had perished on the scaffold, then had I died in innocence, free from the pollutions of passion! Oh, that I had died at the blessed period when the Redeemer shed the halo of His resplendent glory around my spirits, elevating every thought, every hope to heaven! but, to its fuller purification, I should pass through the ordeal of temptation; I fell, Sin triumphed: I am unfit to be Christ's minister. Wanting myself in righteousness, dare I to instruct others? This robe of purity is a mockery!" He rent it, uttered a deep, low cry, and fled from the apartment.

"What can this mean?" demanded Rhodolphe, in a tone of interest. "This youth, I fear, is moon-struck! It grieves me, for he is dear to Rheims!"

The King explained to Rhodolphe his

belief that Chretien was the son of Enguerand Marigni, happily saved from his father's fate ; adding,—

“ Of late the poor youth's health has suffered ; and the Père acquaints me that occasionally, in the paroxysm of delirium, he indulges in a wild fancy of being, by some secret guilt, unfitted for his divine profession. And now to the banquet, our guests are in waiting ! ”

So saying, the King arose and with Lord Rhodolphe proceeded to the banqueting hall.

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Philip expected the Bavarian to occupy a princely suite of apartments, which he had adorned for his reception, at the Hôtel St. Pol ; but, by a chance, which ultimately proved unfortunate, Rhodolphe preferred taking up his residence at the Hôtel of Cluny. Though secretly displeased, the King offered no objection. It was the ninth hour of the evening when Rhodolphe, quitting the Louvre, proceeded towards Nôtre Dame, there to purchase prayers for the

soul of his departed father. The deepening shades were increased by a thick mist, which fell over the city ; and, as he approached the sacred edifice near to which his father had suffered, and kneeling at whose high altar, in the depths of her despair, Dame Beatrix had cursed her Templar's persecutors and the city of his tragical death, a consciousness of his disobedience to her, who was so truly pious, pressed on his heart ; and, as the sadness brought to mind the warnings of the Archbishop to avoid the machinations of Sir Foulque, for the first time Rhodolphe yielded to presentiments of some preternatural evil.

There was a crowd collected round the principal entrance to Nôtre Dame. Some religious ceremony, in honour of the Virgin, was being performed. Forcing his way through the dense mass, Rhodolphe reached the porch, and stopped just where a suspended lamp shone on an ancient statue ; and near to the base of this stood a maiden, attired in a robe of white, her youthful brows encircled with a wreath of water-lilies, contrasting well with the dark hair

which fell over her shoulders. Once seen, that form could never be forgotten ; and with an emotion surprising to himself, Rhadolphe recognised Bona, the jeweller's daughter. Advancing, he muttered some indistinct words of recognition and inquiry.

Bona, on seeing him, started, and in her embarrassment, too tightly pulled a rosary of large orient pearl, with credoes of amber, which hung on her arm ; the thread snapped, and the beads rolled on the ground. They both stooped to collect them, and now glowing with blushes, she thanked Rhadolphe for her escape from the wolves, adding,—

“ Sir Knight, care has been taken of the good steed you so generously lent to my father ;” she sighed, as she added, “ A noble hound followed it, and it has been my peculiar care.”

Then the knight interrupted her,—

“ Thanks, maiden, if you have cared for my good hound Ion. I brought it from Greece. It is old, and much I grieved when I thought it had been destroyed by the wolves, and now I envy its fate.”

They were still conversing when the

loud peal of an organ was heard. Bona exclaimed, hastily,—

“I go to join a choir of maidens engaged in a sacred rite; and you, noble sir, cannot follow.” With these words she disappeared through an inner door.

As he turned round, Rhodolphe perceived that some person stood behind the shade of a pillar observing them; not caring, he stooped to raise some of the pearls of the chaplet he saw lying near, and then entered the church, and passed by an aisle to a shrine dedicated to the memory of the Templars, and which was erected for those who, mourning their fates, offered up prayers and oblations for the weal of their departed spirits.

Near the shrine sat a woman, clad in the weeds of poverty. Supposing her engrossed in devotion, Rhodolphe, having concluded his prayers, and laid a large gift on the altar, was retiring, when, grasping his arm, she announced to him that she was Freida the Saxon, lately received by Dame Beatrix with so much kindness; in requital of which she would warn him of the enemies who

surrounded him in Paris ; but as she feared discovery, requested that he would on the following evening meet her near the Apostate's baths. As they were in the neighbourhood of Cluny, he could do so without inconvenience.

Aware of the Pagan's connexion with his departed father, Rhodolphe unreflectingly promised the interview ; unhappily, not unobserved by Gaultier, who hovered near, though they saw him not. Also, it was he who had watched the Bavarian's meeting with Bona Clisson in the porch of Nôtre Dame and the breaking of her rosary.

* * * *

Three weeks glided by since the hunter's return to Paris. Arrangements for Rhodolphe's combat with Sir Foulque were being prepared. It was to take place in a meadow not far from Chretien's blasted tree, and, as may be supposed, created no small interest, and an equal ratio of envy towards those whose guerdon of success would be a fair lady and her broad lands.

Short as had been the period since Rhodolphe's arrival, many events of importance

had taken place. Gaultier had introduced Freida into the Queen's apartments under the disguise of a pilgrim, who, having spent much time in Palestine, could amuse her Majesty by relating the wonderful achievements of many a Christian knight. This was a favourite recreation with ladies of high degree, who, uninstructed in reading, had no other means of acquiring information. He had also represented the Jongleur as a fortune-teller, one versed in prescient knowledge.

Once admitted to an interview, Freida's talents gained on the Queen's friendship ; more especially as the Jongleur promised at some future period to cast her horoscope—a forbidden pleasure which her Majesty had not resolution to resist.

Agatha hailed the Jongleur's appearance with pleasure, hoping she might advise her how to secure the affections of Rhodolphe, towards whom she now felt a sincere attachment, excited, rather than repelled, by his neglect ; for, being resolved never to claim her as his bride, still of necessity postponing the declaration until after the

combat, the Bavarian shunned her as much as courtesy admitted, and for this purpose dubbed himself the Queen's squire, whose colours he wore,—unreflectingly, and without passion or motive, paying her Majesty all attention, and ultimately this led to jealousy and to scandal.

At first Philip imputed his manner to an honourable wish not to gain Agatha's affections till the combat was decided. Then his pride took alarm at Rhodolphe's attention to the Queen; and he was the more offended because the Bavarian, in his negotiation for the Emperor, had refused to yield up any point that he considered favourable to the Ghibelline cause. Thus the King's first favourable opinion of the knight was changed into disapprobation, suspicion, and jealousy.

Meantime, Rhodolphe, who, from the passions of love, jealousy, or interest, was the engrossing object of all their thoughts and schemes, had yielded himself up to Bona. So absorbing was his passion, that, though frequently warned by Freida of the danger with which enmity surrounded him,

he took no pains to guard against his enemies. On the contrary, seeing in Gaultier the chief instrument of his father's death, he lost no opportunity of treating him with scorn. This provoked Gaultier to a still darker hatred, and, as formerly, stooping to the meanness of a spy, he discovered the knight's visits to Bona, also his interviews with Freida in the Apostate's unholy grove.

From the first evening Rhodolphe had seen Bona in the portico of *Nôtre Dame*, he had never missed its vesper service, and at that hour Bona was surely there. Sometimes the knight only saw her in the distance with the stern jeweller, or with a *Cordelier* brother; but occasionally opportunity for a few words together had arisen. They must on the maiden's side have been those of kindness, else the Bavarian had not ventured to her hotel in the Rue Maraveaux, where Hubert resided. Had the jeweller been at home, the excuse was ready,—the knight came for his gallant steed; being absent, of a truth, by Bona no excuse was required. Now, during those interviews, Rhodolphe spoke no words of tenderness, yet gentle

converse was not wanted ; even Ion the hound supplied it by his gambols. Then Bona had been permitted to witness the jousts practised in the meadow of Vincennes for the knights' amusement and practice ; and though but a mock - fight, she had trembled lest the Bavarian might receive a wound, and rejoiced as he bore off each prize. And then she, who had been educated within the massy walls of St. Mary's Convent, listened in surprise to Rhodolphe, as he spoke of Greece—the land of poetry and love ! Oh ! it was rapture to hear him ; and, yielding to the fascination, she soon loved the knight with impassioned tenderness.

Monday, the 1st of October, 1319, had come, and on the following Wednesday the combat was to take place. Already a temporary gallery for the spectators had been erected round three sides of the meadow ; the fourth side being left open for the accommodation of the populace of low degree. The Roturier, followed by a long train of desperadoes, had arrived in Paris, he being secretly resolved, that if Rhodolphe

gained the victory over his pupil in arms, Sir Foulque, that he should not quit the arena alive. It is but justice to add, that Gaultier was ignorant of this fierce intention of assassinating the Bavarian knight.

After much reflection Rhodolphe had at length concluded upon acquainting Bona of his passion. In thus yielding to love he did not rush blindly on his fate. Of Bona's descent from the D'Evreux by her mother's side he remained ignorant ; that through her father, she possessed wealth, he surmised ; but the proud Bavarian eschewed the gold obtained by humble industry. "If I wed Bona," he thought, "I will be cast off by the Emperor and the whole Ghibelline party ; nay, my noble mother, forgetting how much she sacrificed to the same passion, will never receive in kindness the daughter of a jeweller. So be it ! Bona to me is the pearl of inestimable price, for whose possession I renounce the pride, ambition, and glory, which ruled my past life,—my part is chosen ; soon as this combat is over, should I, as from my former success in arms I expect, be hailed as a conqueror,

then shall I renounce my right to Agatha, leaving her the demesnes of D'Abeis as compensation ; when, claiming Bona as my bride, I will to Palestine, and in its sunny, blessed city, seek out my fortune ; with Bona at my side, it must, methinks, be prosperous."

Thus resolved, he proceeded on the Monday to Nôtre Dame at the matin-hour. Disappointed in the hope of there meeting Bona, and influenced by the stern feeling of desperation which guides a man who concentrates his whole hopes in one object, mounted on his proudest steed, Rhadolphe, no longer seeking privacy, rode boldly forward to the jeweller's ; none who marked his haughty bearing could have suspected the mental struggle which flushed his brow with scarlet, but paled his parched and quivering lips.

Hubert was from home, so the knight ascended to the apartment where, on his former visits, Bona had received him. It was a long, narrow chamber, with little pretension to elegance ; the walls, divided into recesses secured by a strong net-work of iron, through which glittered the jewel-

ler's massy gold and silver plate, and at his command Bona, during his absence, sat as a guardian over the treasure of wealth.

On the Bavarian's entrance Bona was sitting near a small table engaged in embroidering a rose-coloured veil of the most delicate texture with silks of various hues, intermingled with pearl and a few brilliants. On seeing him she started from her seat, casting aside the work, and, to disguise her embarrassment, caressing the hound which had been lying at her feet.

Full of his purpose Rhodolphe advanced, and, gallantly sinking on one knee, pressed her hand with an air of tender devotion.

Trembling from emotion she timidly said,—

“Sir Knight, come you to claim this hound? it grieves me to part with Ion, but he is yours;” she sank back on her seat, resting her head against the dog’s shoulder.

“Would it grieve you, Bona, to part with the hound?” he said in a tone of tenderness.

“Know that within two days my combat with Sir Foulque takes place, after that,

Bona, be my lot conquest or defeat, Ion is yours ; nay, more — ”

He paused, struck by her emotion, caused by the belief that he alluded to his expected nuptials with Agatha ; the dread of his discovering her sentiments increased her confusion : snatching up the veil she resumed her embroidery.

“ How delicate in texture ! ” said Rhodolphe, placing himself by her side and raising it ; “ and how richly embroidered ! It must be designed as the bridal veil of some princess,—it glads me to see this Oriental fashion introduced into France ! Rose is Love’s favourite colour, and sheds a radiance over the beauty which it affects to shade ; and this knot of pearl, with its brilliant centre, is a symbol of the mysterious tie which the shears of Death alone can sever, and the brilliants bespeak a glorious and happy destiny ! Bona, it matters not for whom this veil was intended by the jeweller, I, Rhodolphe, swear it shall never grace any brow but yours,—say it is your bridal veil ! ” again he pressed her hand.

“Blessed Virgin uphold me!” prayed Bona, internally, “and let me not betray my presumptuous passion to one that will soon wed Lady Agatha; and, oh! in mercy let not the knight learn that I am to be the bride of the recreant burgher, Paul Deschamps. Mother of consolation and grace, hear my prayer, and grant that the tomb may enclose me ere those, my hateful nuptials, are perpetrated. Oh! it were worse than the most painful death to wed him I hate—abhor!”

“It is—it must be your bridal veil, my beautiful Bona,” cried the knight, as he passionately pressed his lips to her forehead, murmuring some gentle words.

At this proof of tenderness Bona’s brain seemed to turn. Bursting from his embrace she staggered across the apartment. There is no possibility of following up or explaining the tumult of thoughts and passions which rushed through her soul with the force of a torrent escaped from its boundary. She, that young maiden, previously so gentle,

calm, and retiring, as to appear incapable of powerful emotion, now obeying the impulse of despair, turning towards Rhodolphe, exclaimed, in a broken voice,—

“ You are right! this is my bridal veil! by my father’s commands I have wrought it! Oh! is it not strange? Mark me, Sir Knight,—when you saved me from the demon-wolf I was the destined bride of ——” She shuddered with emotions of disgust, then cast the veil around her, looked wildly at Rhodolphe, and ere he recovered from the astonishment her manner awakened, fled from the apartment.

A few moments after Hubert entered, and, respectfully addressing Rhodolphe, said,—

“ Noble knight, you come to claim your steed and hound, both have been well cared for. Noble Sir, look around, and claim of all you see what most pleases, and accept the same, as a small reward, for the great good I owe you in having saved my daughter’s life from the demon wolf.”

“ Nay, Hubert,” replied Rhodolphe;

“I have come to claim that daughter as my guerdon ; all other I reject. I want not gold.”

“Ha !” cried Hubert, in vexed surprise ; “know you aught of my child to encourage this wild fancy ? or do you mock our humility ? Can it be,” he thought, “that Bona has acquainted this Bavarian of her mother’s proud descent from the royal house of her birth ?”

“What mean you by the question, Do I know aught of your daughter ?” demanded Rhodolphe, surprised at the jeweller’s manner. “I see that she is beautiful, and my spirit whispers that she is pure as lovely,—I require no more.”

“This sounds well,” answered the jeweller, gravely ; “but the soaring eagle seeks not his mate with the homely swallow ; thus the descendant of princes must chose a higher dame than an artisan’s daughter.”

“I love her !” cried Rhodolphe, haughtily ; “and for that am I content to cast every other hope aside ! What more do

you require? I tell you, jeweller, I will wed your daughter!"

" You love her!" retorted Hubert, bitterly; " and with possession the sentiment will soon fade and vanish: then, woe to the jeweller's daughter!—scorned, neglected, a stumbling-block in pride's way, cast into a cheerless obscurity, she will droop and wither! Sir Knight, I know your class; experience has taught the bitter knowledge, and I suspect and abhor the great!"

" Does love always fly so rapidly?" demanded Rhodolphe, incredulously.

" With our sex," cried Hubert; " but not with the gentler. No; once a woman *truly* loves, she knows no change; but, like a ministering angel, sheds a halo round the hearth, be it ever so humble, which she has stooped from her high sphere to adorn."

He sighed aloud,—

" Jeweller, this is trifling," said Rhodolphe; " you know me, enough; I love your daughter, I demand no treasure with her. Your own words uphold my claims;

if I gain Bona's love, it will prove a balm for every sorrow,—a compensation for every sacrifice made for her possession."

"I regret this unequal passion," cried Hubert, gravely; "but when I explain that a youth, whom I approve, has long been her destined husband, and that, though unacquainted with the use of arms, he is still worthy of her love, and that, if she accepts him not, a father's curse shall attend her, then will you not, as a true and Christian knight, step between me and my child? Would that you proved my gratitude by demanding some other boon! I have much wealth: command it;—nay, to half of what I possess."

Rhodolphe's voice quivered, as he demanded, hastily,—

"Does the fair Bona, then, love this youth?"

"Wherefore not?" evasively replied Hubert. "For months they have lived in companionship together. Then, Sir Knight, he is of France, your junior in years, in

person comely, and in his art most excellent ; then I esteem him as a son and EQUAL."

Commanding his emotion, Rhodolphe said, haughtily,—

"Enough,—to-morrow, jeweller, I send for my steed ; with your permission, Ion the hound shall stay with your daughter. Is this too large a boon for the service I have done towards you and her ?"

"It is granted !" exclaimed Hubert, "and willingly. Oh ! that I possessed the power of more fully serving you, and ——"

"No more, jeweller," cried Rhodolphe, in proud accents, waving him off.

As the Knight hurried on through the long passage he beheld, with surprise, the rose-coloured veil rent to shreds, which were scattered in his path. With a feeling of bitter mortification and agonising jealousy, he crushed the fragments beneath his feet. A few moments after Hubert distinguished the clatter of his horse's hoofs as he galloped off to the Louvre.

CHAPTER IX.

“ Our conversation turned on that dreaded alliance. My father has informed me that within three days my union must take place. ‘ Within three days ? ’ I exclaimed ; ‘ never—never ! ’ ”—KOTZEBUE.

ON Rhadolphe’s riding off, Hubert, much grieved at discovering his love for Bona, of which previously he had entertained no suspicion, hastened back to her apartment, gathering up the fragments of the rose-coloured veil which, in despair at parting from Rhadolphe, she had torn. Like all persons who earn their wealth by industry, Hubert much prized his, and was irritated at seeing a web so rare and valuable thus wantonly destroyed.

Bona was reclining on the bench, resting her throbbing temples against the

hound's head, which she held against her bosom ; and, as she heard the clattering of Rhodolphe's steed when he dashed down the street, no longer attempting to control her emotion, she wept aloud, not heeding her father's entrance.

"Rise!" said Hubert, in a voice of anger,—“rise, and say from what motive has the Bavarian Knight dared to destroy this!” He held up the veil, so rare and costly. “Mark me, humble as I am—but for kindness past the haughty noble should taste my vengeance!”

“Blame not the Knight,” replied Bona, timidly. “Father, it was I who tore the veil.”

“And wherefore?” demanded Hubert, in amazement.

“I scarce can tell. But when I thought that I should wed the recreant Paul Deschamps, him whom I so despise,—loathe, hate,—a terrible grief seized me, strange fancies flitted across my brain; then I remembered a Minstrel's tale which I had heard in Bourges, of how, in the olden times,

some Grecian dame each night unravelled a curious web she had spent her morning in weaving, because, until it was finished, she need not accept a suitor. The device pleased my fancy ; and as you, my father, had more than once desired that I would hasten my embroidery, as, until the veil was finished, my nuptials should not be solemnised, clinging to the hope, I rent in twain the web you so prized."

" Your wasteful folly shall not avail !" cried Hubert, in anger,—" nay, to punish it, know that ere to-morrow's sunset Deschamps will be in Paris, and the following one you shall be his bride !"

" Father, I will not—cannot—wed the man I despise ! it were a crime ; so may Christ assoil me. Oh ! blessed Virgin, look down in pity !"

" Presumptuous maiden, who dares to dispute a parent's command ! Ha ! think you I am deceived ? Well I know it is love to the Bavarian Knight which urges you on to disobedience ; thus, in place of maidenly

modesty, I find you foward seeking where you should be sought."

Irritated at the coarseness of the accusation, Bona's face and neck glowed with indignation, and with an air of offended dignity, she would have hurried from the apartment. Hubert felt abashed : " In all respects," he thought, " she bears the impress of the haughty race from which she is descended. She loves me not, as did her mother," he sighed heavily ; " and if she weds a noble, she, my only child, will soon learn to despise me. Bona !" he said aloud, " could you but imagine the misery resulting from unequal marriages, against which our laws have placed such a ban, you would uproot this proud Ghibelline from your heart ! Maiden, once possession cools his love, he will despise the jeweller's daughter !"

" Never !" she replied, with spirit. " Even a Visconti dared not despise a daughter of the princely line of D'Evreux !"

" You are unlike your mother: she

knew no pride !” retorted Hubert, with asperity ; “ and learn, to your confusion, that this Rhodolphe, who amuses time with the jeweller’s daughter, is the betrothed of Lady Agatha. So, Bona, no more frowardness, whose only fruit is to shame and wound your parent.”

The heart of Bona trembled, as in gentler accents she replied,—

“ I speak not of the noble knight,—I but supplicate for a return to St. Mary’s. Take Paul Deschamps to your heart, to your home, to your wealth,—resign me to God,—I ask no more. Grant my request, in memory of my dead mother !”

“ Bona, I would not be harsh, but I know the selfishness, the pride, the presumption of the nobles. Think of the evils they inflicted on me,—widowhood, exile, woe ;—and there was no justice for the man of practical virtue against the drones who devoured sweets gathered by industry. I despise,—nay, I hate the aristocracy,—abjure—curse them !”

Inflamed to higher anger by the recol-

lection, he fiercely swore that Bona should marry Paul Deschamps. "So consent gracefully," he said, "to what is inevitable."

"Never," she vehemently replied, "will I wed the caitiff who fled in the hour of my danger, leaving me to perish only for the knight's gallantry!"

Just opposite to where they stood, hung a picture of price: it was by Giovanni Cimabue. The subject represented Jephtha explaining his fatal vow to his daughter. The despair of the father, the subdued grief of the daughter, were finely delineated.

"Look at that painting, Bona," cried the jeweller; "there a dutiful child, to please her father, unmurmuringly submits to the sacrifice, even of life;—noble example!"

Bona advanced, gazed on it with attention, then gravely said,—

"The Israelite's vow was a holy one,—made to his God. Then Jephtha only asked his daughter to die: it were, methinks, an easy task, rather than wed one I despise,—abhor! Oh! surely a Christian father would not press a child to the crime of

falsifying her truth at the altar of God, by vowing love where she only felt antipathy,—unconquerable antipathy!"

Hubert furiously dashed off the hand she caressingly laid on his.

"Dear father," she said, "of this picture, at St. Mary's, when the priests expounded to the nuns the Holy Scriptures, they insisted that Jephtha's vow only consigned his daughter to a perpetual celibacy, for, even in those by-gone days, there were sanctuaries to receive the afflicted daughters of Zion. Oh, my father! I, a Christian maid, kneel in supplication for the same indulgence!"

Spurning her, he exclaimed,—

"Shall the scheme to whose execution I devoted my labour,—for without wealth all plans fall to the ground,—be subverted by the whine of a foward maiden? Well, it matters not: your obstinacy, pride, and love for the strange knight, only render my task difficult, but cannot alter my purpose. Now, Bona, farewell! The next three days we shall not meet: I go to hasten the young

jeweller, Deschamps ; be prepared, Bona, to receive him as a husband, for, the morning after our arrival here,—four days from this,—you SHALL be his bride. Blight not, then, your prospects by a fruitless opposition to my will!" On pronouncing these stern words, he departed. From the casement, Bona saw him mount his mule, and hurry off at an unusual pace.

Wringing her hands in despair, Bona sighed,—

"Oh! where can I turn for relief? oh! why is D'Esculo—more dear, more tender than my stern father—absent? Oh, D'Esculo! you who have watched over my infancy, would never consent to this sacrifice of my happiness, my truth! Death, the most horrible, were preferable to an union with Deschamps! Let me intercede with the Virgin, to protect me in this extremity!" Throwing a mantle over her form, she almost ran towards Nôtre Dame, as if there certain of relief. She started on feeling her arm grasped. It was the Père

Lagravare, who, surprised at seeing Bona rushing wildly through the streets, had suddenly checked her progress.

“Bona, wherefore this unbecoming haste?” he angrily demanded.

In trembling accents she explained the scene just described.

“Compose yourself, Bona,” he mildly said; “D’Esculo, anticipating all this, has won for you the King’s protection; I shall claim it. Here we are, at Nôtre Dame; enter, and pray at your usual shrine until my return. I pity you, and condemn your father’s severity.”

As the Père retired, it sounded six; early vespers had commenced.

It was nine when the Père returned; he brought with him the gown and cap of a student of the Sorbonne. Bona, at his command, quickly donned them, and, in this disguise, proceeded, by solitary streets, to the Louvre, entering by a portal which opened on a narrow winding staircase, leading to the Tour de Libraire, which happily was unoccupied. The Père placed the

agitated girl in a chair opposite a folio volume, trimmed a lamp, and commanded, should any one enter, that she would keep stooped over the book, as if engaged in study. She promised, and the Père retired. Poor Bona! how her young heart trembled with fanciful fears, potent as realities, when she found herself alone in that spacious apartment, with its deep shadows and solitary light!

CHAPTER X.

“ Whose was the hand that turned away
The perils of the infuriate fray ?

* * * *

She knew not ; for a faintness came
Chill o'er her, and her sinking frame,
Amid the ruins of that hour,
Lay, like a pale and scorched flower,
Beneath the red volcano's shower :
But oh ! the sights and sounds of dread,
That shocked her ere her senses fled.”

Lalla Rookh.

ON this evening, Freida, anxious to meet Rhodolphe, had been loitering about Nôtre Dame. At once discovering Bona, in despite of her disguise, she followed, and saw her with the Père enter the portal leading to the Tour de Libraire. This mystery, the Jongleur hastily concluded, was to end in

Bona's union with Rhodolphe ; for she was aware of their attachment, and in the frenzy of revenge, she resolved that Bona should perish rather than that Edrid's brother should wed the daughter of his executioner.

Freida at this period had free access to the Queen's apartments. There she hastened to win Agatha to her purpose. Urged by pride and love ; for since their acquaintance Agatha had become passionately attached to Rhodolphe, she readily yielded to the Jongleur's wishes. But the assistance of Sir Foulque was absolutely necessary towards the bold plan for Bona's destruction, and it was easily attained.

Not a moment to be lost, lest the King, who was absent, might return. So Agatha entered the Tour de Libraire, where, from the exhaustion of over-excitement, Bona had fallen asleep, her head leant against the back of the chair, the student's cap had fallen off, and the luxuriant hair of raven blackness fell like a cloud to shade her loveliness.

Gazing on this beauty, envy and jealousy rendered Agatha more firm in her evil purpose.

Rousing Bona, and caressing her, the artful Agatha won her to enter into a full detail of the circumstances which had brought her to the Louvre. Taking advantage of the knowledge, with much eloquence she persuaded the simple-hearted damsel that Philip, on hearing of the Père's having encouraged Bona in disobedience to her parent, and he, Philip, being a just, religious man—moreover, partial to Hubert Clisson—had rebuked the Père, and sent off express for Clisson to return with Deschamps, when, to prove his royal authority, he would, on the very hour of Clisson's and the young jeweller's return, see the dreaded union take place.

This so agitated Bona, that Agatha had to supply restoratives to keep her from fainting.

Agatha then persuaded Bona, that having since the evening of their meeting in the wood of Vincennes felt an interest

in her fate, dear as a sister's, she had laid a plan for her escape—a friend had consented to receive Bona until she could manage to return to her convent, and a servitor, whose fidelity was unimpeachable, waited to convey her from the Louvre. Terrified, confounded, Bona seemed stupified—quite passive; but Agatha was earnest in purpose. She twisted up the tresses, which in her malice she would willingly have shorn, fastened on the student's cap, then throwing her arm round the delicate form, actually dragged Bona down the stairs. At the portal, mounted on a charger, his beaver up and visor down, waited Sir Foulque. Bona was placed before him, and swift as thought he bore her to the entrance of the Apostate's baths; for there, in Freida's care, she was to be placed.

The air through which Bona passed had renovated her fainting form, and when Sir Foulque drew up at the unholy place, superstitious fears conquered even dread realities. The baths and laurel-groves around—scenes in ages past of heathen rites—were now reported to be the haunt of the con-

demned spirits of those disbelievers, and devoutly Bona adopted the idea. So when Foulque attempted to force his way with her through a broken arch, she uttered piercing cries, struggling to escape.

It was a fortunate chance which that evening had induced Rhodolphe to try and see Freida, who had promised to acquaint him with some particulars connected with the Templars at Acre. Disappointed in finding the Jongleur, he was leaving when attracted by the cries.

The moon at its full rendered objects visible, and, to his horror, the Bavarian beheld Bona, her hair dishevelled, her dress torn, struggling to escape from Sir Foulque, whom, at a glance, he recognised.

Drawing his sword, he rushed to the rescue. A well-directed thrust wounded Sir Foulque above the right wrist, disabling him; then, still wielding his weapon, with the left arm Rhodolphe clasped the fainting Bona to his bosom. Frantic with pain, terrified at the consequences which would accrue to his discomfiture, when Philip

learned of the attempt to carry off a young lady under royal protection,—a D'Evreux, too; and even the poor excuse for such unmanly violence could not be imputed to love, as Sir Foulque's passion for Agatha was no secret. Thus, for once, the unvarnished truth would be out. Bona was to be destroyed, that he (Foulque) might inherit her lands. Here the rude Roturier could not assist him, but he would consult Gaultier and Agatha; their interests, as well as his, were at venture, and they possessed keen wits.

Freida, who had been expecting Bona, now stepped forth. Let us do her justice. Revenge paled in her bosom when she apprehended evil to Rhodolphe, towards whom she nourished an affection which was truly maternal. That Gaultier and Foulque were capable of any villainy, she was confident. Thus, for evil purposes, she selected them as tools, loudly she now called out,—

“ Fly ! fly, Lord Rhodolphe ! and on the instant acquaint Philip with your rescue of this Bona ; else it may, by the glossing

tongue of Gaultier and the ferocity of Sir Foulque, be turned to your disadvantage."

"I cannot leave until I learn what placed Bona," he pressed her to his throbbing heart, "in such sad plight, and then my first duty is to restore her to a father's care. May I not visit there?" he whispered.

Covered with confusion at the idea of the Bavarian discovering her love towards him; then, on the other hand, he might despise her for eloping from her father, a bold, impious measure, and pleased with the finely-chiselled features of Freida, disengaging herself from the knight's caress, Bona, grasping the Jongleur's arm, said,—

"Gentle pilgrim, I seek this night your protection. Oh, do not deny it! by your pilgrim vow, I demand support!"

Startled,—nay, affected by this address from one she had sworn to injure,—abashed, Freida drew back. On the instant, loudly was a bugle wound; echo told back the sound. Rhodolphe stepped into the shade where Freida stood to escape observation.

A gallant company dashed by, followed by falconers. They were soon lost to sight.

“Rhodolphe,” cried Freida, in a tone of terror, “by all you hold dear or sacred, be guided by me! Hasten to the King, and explain this scene. There is ever great vantage to those who have the first hearing. They have only to assert; the second must adopt the more complicated task of controverting. Maiden,” addressing Bona, “if you value this knight’s life, urge him to his good!”

Shuddering at the idea of his danger, Bona pressed the subject. Folding her, in despite of a faint effort on her side, to his heart, he consented, conditionally, that she promised to meet him next night in the Apostate’s grove. She consented, and he rode off at a steady pace.

Thus Bona Clisson was solely consigned to the Jongleur’s care, her sworn foe, and was by her led into the deepest shades of the unhallowed grove.

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Freida judged correctly. Lord Rhodolphe

should have hastened to the Louvre ; but innocence and truth frequently, in self-confidence, neglect the measure to which hypocrisy resorts, and is thus defeated. Even while under the influence of passion, the Bavarian still loitered with Bona. Maddened by defeat, and the loss, for the time being, of his sword-arm, Sir Foulque had consulted with Gaultier, who at once comprehended that either Rhodolphe or they must be involved in ruin. The extremity left no choice, so he resolved to accuse the Bavarian of having conquered the war-wolf, a demon, by supernatural means. His being the son of Guy D'Auvergne would give a colouring to the evidence ; and having, for some time, been preparing for such an accusation, the Bishop rather rejoiced in the event which brought matters to a crisis.

Strange what a tissue of unimportant events arose to support Falsehood against Truth !

CHAPTER XI.

“Vengeance, king—I pray thee, vengeance!—
Do I ask this right in vain?
Lo! my daughter has been outraged;
For thine own, thy kingdom’s sake,
Look, Alfonso, to mine honour,
Vengeance thou or I must take.”—*The Cid.*

ON the morning previous to the expected combat Philip, surrounded by his peers, took his high seat in the Palace of Justice to discuss some business connected with the Flemish war. Suddenly Gaultier, followed by the Lord of Marche, Sir Foulque, three knights from the neighbourhood of Laval, the Roturier, and several inferior witnesses, entered and boldly accused Lord Rhodolphe of holding secret communion with the great author of Evil. We pass over the detail of charges, which at the present time would

appear too wild, exaggerated, and absurd, to gain from the most prejudiced or ignorant a moment's attention, but which, during the fourteenth century, were considered of the most serious nature. Suspicion once awakened, it is sad to reflect how many circumstances, simple in themselves, arise to the prejudice of the accused, rendering the path of Justice more difficult, and too often condemning the innocent, nay, to the extreme punishment of an ignominious death. Thus, the carcass of the demon-wolf not being produced ; Rhodolphe having in his possession a broken crucifix, and which Gaultier asserted had been severed and trampled upon to conciliate the demon ; again, the knight having on the evening of his arrival in Paris met Bona in the portico of Nôtre Dame, and seduced her to insult the Virgin by snapping her rosary to pieces, scattering the blessed beads to be trampled upon ; to sum up all, Bona's mysterious disappearance. Sir Foulque then detailed how on the previous evening as he rode through the avenue which lay between the

Apostate's baths and the streets leading to the Hôtel of Cluny, he had seen Rhodolphe dragging Bona into the laurel-grove, said to be the haunt of malignant spirits. Here the Earl of Marche stood up and corroborated this part of the testimony by mentioning that as he also rode in that direction he had seen Rhodolphe glide into the grove with two figures ; so rapid had been their movement he had no opportunity of making further observations, and he commanded that Rhodolphe, also Hubert Clisson, should be immediately summoned. In obedience they soon after, guarded by soldiers, entered the court of Justice.

From that moment Rhodolphe felt that for him there was no escape, and he resolved to meet his fate with a spirit proud and indomitable as that of his warrior father under similar circumstances ; so, struggling to disguise his deep grief beneath a calm aspect, he explained every event as it had occurred since his entering France, save his knowledge of Freida ; to betray their acquaintance would still further criminate himself

and expose the miserable Jongleur to a horrible death ; and, as having been once the beloved of Guy D'Auvergne, as a true knight he felt himself bound to protect, not betray her.

On being commanded, Rhodolphe produced the broken crucifix and beads of pearl he had found in the portico of Nôtre Dame, after Bona broke her rosary. Precious to him as having belonged to her, at the sight of these desecrated symbols, supposed to have been broken in disdain, the whole assembly groaned with a devout horror. Hubert Clisson not only declared them to have been his daughter's, but explained Rhodolphe's passionate love for her, and how he had sued for her hand in despite of his engagement with Lady Agatha. No further evidence to prove the Bavarian's unholy compact with the enemy of mankind was required. Even Philip's incredulity on such points of belief was staggered, and, though deeply grieved at the necessity, and foreseeing much evil to France from the Ghibelline faction who never failed to re-

venge injuries, and who even scoffed at charges which they held in derision, he weakly pronounced his belief of the Bavarian's guilt; however, at his entreaty, backed by that of the Earl of Marche, ere a final sentence was pronounced, a party of soldiers, accompanied by Gaultier, Sir Foulque, Hubert Clisson, and several knights and gentlemen, curious to follow up a scene so extraordinary and mysterious, proceeded to the Apostate's grove and baths. Preceded by priests holding up crucifixes they entered, but the unhallowed place was desolate. However, the rude circle, which Freida on the evening of Gaultier's visit had marked out, was still visible, and at some paces from it lay the broken end of the crucifix, the upper part of which Rhodolphe had in his possession; some shreds, too, of linen of a fine texture and a delicate blue colour, peculiar to Venice, were also scattered around, here and there, and even slightly tinged with blood. Almost frantic with despair at recognising them as Bona's, the jeweller, forgetting his own stern disposition

and the cruelty which had driven his daughter to seek other protection, overlooking Rhodolphe's gallant protection from the wolves, and believing him to have carried off Bona, loudly demanded retribution, the most exemplary, if she was not restored. By this time Philip and a gallant company arrived at the Apostate's grove; with them was Rhodolphe, surrounded by a strong guard.

The most just men are, with a few god-like exceptions, influenced — it may be unconsciously — by their prejudices and affections. Now, Philip's were all against the Bavarian. He nourished an incipient jealousy for Rhodolphe's gallantries to the Queen, which she received with a pleasure bordering on levity. He was discontented, too, at the pertinacity with which, in carrying on the Emperor's negotiation, Rhodolphe struggled to gain an advantage for the Empire over France. If he did not believe all the charges brought forward by Gaultier and his party, still, as before said, he was staggered in his opinion; for he, in some degree, admitted the possibility of sorcery.

But of all the circumstances, none so irritated him, or provoked such wrath, as Bona's disappearance, and he had no hesitation in imputing her escape to Rhodolphe. The knight, then, was a seducer of innocence ; nay, at the very time he was pledged to combat for a lady of high degree placed under the royal protection. This act was in itself worthy of death, and Philip's indignation was urged on by secret vexation at not even being allowed to see the beauty so lauded by all, and the reflection of how grieved his friend, Francesco D'Esculo, would be at the loss of her whom he deemed his earthly treasure—lost, too, in a manner so mysterious and horrible.

Ordering the beautiful groves of laurel, for ages the ornament of Paris, but which the King in his wrath termed a demons' haunt, to be uprooted and burned, he hastily returned to the Palace of Justice. And there, to the joy of the multitude, who shrank with a righteous horror from the monstrous crimes of the Bavarian knight, the ill-fated Rhodolphe was condemned to

be executed at six on the following morning on the gibbet of Montfaucon ; and to prove that neither rank, nor prowess in arms, could protect or shield a traitor, it was expressly commanded that he should be executed in the superb armour which he had worn some three weeks before on entering the city as a triumphant conqueror. On hearing this terrible sentence, the love of life—a life so brilliant in all its associations, throbbed at the heart of Rhodolphe, increased by pity at what his noble mother would suffer at his loss, and a passion for Bona, which even the fear of death could not extinguish. So loudly and boldly asserting his innocence, which he offered to prove by passing through the ordeals of fire and water, or of single combat with any three antagonists, each to take their turn, he dashed down his greave.

The Earl of Marche upheld the justice of bringing the knight to proof ; nay, was so fervent in the cause of his defence, as to offer to raise Rhodolphe's greave and give him the chance of single combat even with himself ; but Gaultier had won over too

large a party, and Philip's heart on this occasion was darkened, as we have said, by passion. So, in despite of the Earl of Marche and a few others, the sentence was finally passed, and Rhodolphe handed over to the Provost. Thus, by a strange concatenation of untoward circumstances, both the Templar's sons were doomed to the same awful destiny—to die like unto their parent an ignominious death by the torture of FIRE !

CHAPTER XII.

“Lead on!

So having said, as one from sad dismay,
Be comforted, and after thoughts disturbed,
Submitting to what seemed remediless.”

MILTON.

ON hurrying Bona from Rhodolphe, after her rescue from Sir Foulque, Freida led her to the broken column where she had related her wild tale to Gaultier, and then inquired what could have induced her to fly from her father's protection.

With much simplicity, Bona related his determination of forcing her to an union with Paul Deschamps, whom she deeply abhorred.

This explanation embarrassed the Jongleur. If Hubert would grieve at his daughter's elevation to rank, might she not

work out her revenge against the jeweller by uniting Bona to Sir Foulque? This would effectually separate her from Rhodolphe, without violence to the lovely being who on the instant was clinging to her with child-like confidence. But then, like a fiend, rose the Jongleur's long-nourished vow of vengeance. So scorning as a weakness the yielding to better feelings, she resolved to perpetrate her revenge.

For the present, it was Freida's policy to treat the gentle damsel with kindness. The Bavarian was to visit her on the following evening, and if she expressed alarm, he would, no doubt, again place her under the royal protection, when an explanation would take place, to the ruin of those who had seduced her from the Louvre, and to the destruction of her (Freida's) scheme of retribution.

Freida recollected, on that night Caleb, with his company of musicians and dancers, were to meet in the grove in performance of a fantastic and Pagan superstition, commemorated every three months at the full

of the moon. Should the Christian maiden witness these heathen orgies and betray them, woe to this the last remnant of the Jongleurs then in France ! So in defiance of Bona's entreaties not to be left alone in the unhallowed grove, she hastened to apprise Caleb of a stranger's presence. There was much delay ere she could meet him ; for he and his party had, it appeared, commenced their performances. Dismissing them, though with difficulty, for they were ardent in the performance of their heathenish rites, she hurried back to Bona. No need, she reflected, of alarming the gentle girl ; it is not her, but my son's executioner, that I would punish. "Oh !" she sighed, "would that De Valois had more fully imbued my mind with his unrelenting vengeance ! My woman's heart fails now that opportunity for its consummation has come." Thus reflecting, she reached the spot where she had left Bona, but she had disappeared. Much alarmed, she searched in all directions, but no Bona was there. The next day passed heavily, when, in early afternoon,

the quiet grove was disturbed by the rushing of a vast concourse of people. Something of discovery must have occurred. Disguised by her pilgrim's dress, Freida mixed in the crowd, and with a grief which defies description, learned of Rhodolphe's trial and condemnation. As the son of D'Auvergne, and the brother of Edrid, he was dear to her as a child, and remorse darted its fangs into her bosom as she reflected, that to the machinations of her fruitless revenge he so loved had fallen the victim.

And now, as if by inspiration, a plan to extricate him rose to her view. To its execution, the assistance of another was absolutely necessary. Summoning Caleb, and giving him gold, she commanded him to purchase two pilgrims' dresses without a moment's delay, such as she then wore, and to hasten with them to the outer court of the Louvre. Next she drew from secret places the gold given to her by Dame Beatrix and Charles de Valois. Concealing them in the folds of her dress, she resorted to the

appointed place near the Louvre. There Caleb, with the pilgrims' dresses, soon arrived. He had placed them in a basket. Taking it in her hand, she proceeded direct to the Queen's apartment; for the influence she had gained over Jane D'Artois might almost, by the ignorant, be deemed preternatural. Still, it was merely genius subduing ignorance.

Her Majesty, whose regret for the Bavarian's fate, and which of a truth had originated as much from terror and disappointed vanity, as from love—for Jane of France was vain and timid to a degree, incapable of strong emotion, and capricious in her fancy—was reclining on a heap of cushions, trying to console Agatha, who suffered the deepest affliction. The imaginary sentiment of love which she had imbibed for Rhodolphe's heroic character, as before observed, had, on their acquaintance, grown into a sincere passion, unchecked by his coldness, which was imputed to a refined sense of honour, which shunned gaining on her affection, until by success at the combat against his rival Sir Foulque, he could in

justice advance his claim to her hand. Deeply had Agatha execrated the chivalric laws which led to such an event ; and had she not trembled lest any bold advance on her side might repel, not gain, on the love of the Bavarian, she would have stood forward to declare her preference. These feelings awakened in her mind such a dislike to Sir Foulque, that she secretly resolved, should he by any fatal chance come off conqueror in the passage of arms, to declare her objection to his suit, and resign every claim to the D'Abeis estates ere she would consent to be his bride,—nay, bury herself within the gloomy walls of a convent in preference. So far she was consistent ; but whenever her thought turned on Chretien, a sickness passed over her soul ; and strange apprehensions, such as men call presentiments, cast the shadows of coming woe before her.

On entering her Majesty's apartment, Freida advanced towards the Queen, and, sinking on her knees, in a low, distinct voice, said,—

“ Madame, I have boldly presumed to intrude into your presence to say, that through your means alone can Lord Rhodolphe be saved from the ignominious death to which, pressed by circumstances, your royal husband has condemned him.”

Agatha sprung from her seat, clapped her hands, exclaiming,—

“ Holy Virgin ! can this be possible ?”

Waving her back, Freida continued to address the Queen as follows :—

“ Your Majesty has oft pressed me, the humblest of your slaves, to foretel the coming events of your life ; still I postponed the revelation till the period when your fortunes in some measure depended upon immediate acts. Nay, look not displeased, royal lady, our fate depends upon our actions. I am no hypocrite, to deceive with false prophecies !”

“ I do not comprehend you,” cried the Queen, impatiently ; “ you but say what I already in some measure know. What I demanded of you was the knowledge of

future events over which my reason or actions can have no control."

"Your Majesty, I come to lead you to an act of grace, which will exalt your name far above that of Isabella of England, or any other proud dame in Christendom, and save Philip from staining the land with innocent blood!"

"Speak quickly, good Freida!" answered the Queen, whose vanity was roused.

"Your Majesty," she said, "by a generosity worthy of the descendant of the noble houses of Artois and Burgundy, can burst asunder the bonds of cruelty and injustice cast round the Bavarian knight. Once liberated, he will hasten back to Munich, and, grateful for your generous kindness, trumpet loudly the virtue of France's beautiful Queen, Jane of Artois! Bard and troubadour will catch the pleasing strain, and for ages your name will be held up as a noble pattern to your sex. Lady, pray to your Saints to assist you in this glorious deed!"

“ You have but to explain the matter, Freida,” replied the Queen, in a low tone of unaffected pleasure at the prospect of present honours and posthumous fame, “ and I will obey your wishes.”

“ A few words, your Majesty, will suffice. The Provost of Paris is open to bribery. The Bavarian is solely under his care, confined within the secret prison of his stronghold. You have but to offer a sufficient guerdon, and Rhodolphe will be released. As to his escape from France, that be my care.”

The Queen’s countenance fell, and she made no reply.

“ Here, Freida,” exclaimed Agatha, as she tore off the various gems which had adorned her stately dress worn at the banquet,—“ here, take these for your noble purpose! Some others I have, they are willingly given to Rhodolphe’s escape.”

She hastened from the apartment to collect them. Freida’s quick eye glanced on the intaglio ring of four zones, which, in

her agitation and hurry, Agatha laid down with the other gems.

“ Ha !” she thought, “ this, at any period, would bring to my presence Chretien, the beloved of Père Lagravare, the youth I have so long wished to see !”

She placed the ring in her bosom.

Lady Agatha now returned. Then the Queen, but with less vivacity, presented some rich armlets, rings, and a chain of massy gold, exclaiming,—

“ Surely these are sufficient to win over the *Chef des rats*, and supply a more plentiful meal of crumbs to his familiars. Wretch !” she added, in a tone of bitterness, “ I could almost believe the wild fables with which an old African slave in the Duke of Burgundy’s service was wont to amuse my childhood,— that when wicked men died, their spirits were translated into the form of some obnoxious animals, towards whom, in life, their propensities bore a resemblance. So methinks, Freida, that when the Provost dies, his miserly soul will pass into a vampire,

and torment the rich by sucking away their gold!"

"It may be true, your majesty," cried Freida, in a tone of indifference, "for it is a doctrine of the fugitive tribes. After this good work of releasing the knight from durance is performed, if your Majesty so wills, I shall relate many a marvellous tale on the subject, but little time now for light talk. The rapacity of the Provost must be satisfied. To his vast wealth these," and she pointed scornfully to the collected heaps of jewels, "may appear a trifle. Noble Jane, that rich cestus round your delicate waist must be presented!"

"Never!" cried the Queen, indignantly. "My cestus! the richest jewel in France, or in all Christendom! My cestus! the superb gift of St. Louis of blessed memory, brought from Palestine to his beloved Blanche! Never! never! Be satisfied that to this knight's support I have granted the bridal gifts presented to me by my august mother, Mahoud of Artois, and peer of France!"

“Support!” retorted Freida; “support to the son of Dame Beatrix! support to the kinsman of the Ghibellines’ chief, Louis of Bavaria, now Emperor! support to the nephew of the Prince of Dauphiny! support to the noblest warrior of the age! nay, but it is a pleasant fancy, and in a merrier mood I might join in laughter, but the business is serious. Your Majesty, I but demand the loan of the cestus, and swear, by every power man ever worshipped, to restore it before the next moon is past,—ay, even though the Provost should demand three times its value in gold,—and which to him will be more acceptable.”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed the Queen. “Where could you, ever clad in sordid weeds, command such wealth?”

With a look of scorn, Freida replied,—

“If silken sheen and glittering baubles were my pleasure, I might command them.” She drew forth the purses of gold she had brought. The Queen looked at Agatha with surprise and dismay. The Jongleur proceeded,—“Besides these, your Majesty,

Lady Beatrix, and a hundred nobles of Germany, will gladly give the gold to release the cestus, and to reward with richer gems the noble lady who so generously pledged it for Rhodolphe's release."

"Oh, doubt her not, my royal mistress! doubt her not!" interrupted Agatha. "I, too, swear that your cestus shall be restored; though all I possess pay the forfeit!"

After a long struggle of contending *vanities*, at length the Queen consented; but her air was discontented and gloomy as she beckoned to Agatha to unclasp it from her waist.

"Nay,—not so, lady!" cried Freida; "your Majesty must present it to the Provost, as I will explain, else it were of no avail."

"Impossible!" cried the Queen, in anger; "the Provost never enters here, except on private business to Philip, who abhors him; besides, it is now late, and by six in the coming morning, as I have heard, Rhodolphe dies at Montfaucon."

Agatha closed her eyes, and shuddered;

but the Jongleur, by no means deterred in her purpose, explained that her Majesty should, on the instant, proceed to the Provost's, and in person make the request. She then drew forth the two pilgrim dresses. But it were tedious to enter into a description of the entreaties, flatteries, and threats of future misery, by which the Queen was at length prevailed upon to take a part in this strange business. Finally, being disguised in the pilgrim's dress, and accompanied by Agatha and the Jongleur under the same disguise, she quitted the Louvre, keeping in the most shaded and secret paths, the party proceeding rapidly.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Well, I see you did overhear something, and so I will tell you the whole. I was saying to myself, In this great scarcity of money what a happiness it would be to have three thousand guineas to one!"—HENRY FIELDING.

WEAKLY obeying the Jongleur, Jane D'Artois, leaning on Agatha, proceeded by tortuous streets and lanes until they reached the Provost's. Gold Freida knew to be the "open sesame;" so, in defiance of the established rule, even at that late hour, she prevailed on the servitor to permit them to enter. One, however, he affirmed was all that he dare show into the Provost: and, by Freida's machinations, that one was the Queen of France.

It was a small, square apartment; its

massy walls had resisted many a siege. Beneath were deep, extensive dungeons : one of these, in particular, was hideous, being hung with instruments of torture and death. There was a curious well in one corner : it opened into the river, and, by working a pump which stood near, any object cast into it was carried off to the Seine, and thus no trace could be discovered.

The Provost deposited his chests of gold and gems in this dungeon ; and it was his wont each night, after the household retired to rest, to steal down and, for some hours, examine and worship this Mammon of his idolatry. The vigil was facilitated by a trap-door in his apartment, opening on a stairs leading direct to the treasure ; and he gloated over the collection of years. Every passion in its commencement has an object ; afterwards it grows into a habit, cold and lifeless, but where there is no inspiration, or spring of thought. To re-purchase a fief in Languedoc, parted with, in Christian zeal, by his father, that he might join the Croisées in Palestine,

was the Provost's ambition : it had been the dream of his childhood, the business of his manhood. To it superior genius and extensive learning had been immolated. Never was there a more sincere votary. Wealth ! — wealth ! To re-purchase the fief, he not only denied his withering form sufficient to support it, but, as hideous guardians of his treasures, he encouraged the rats, and, strange to say, distinguished some of them as favourites. As yet he had not succeeded in gaining the price of the coveted fief,—the high mark heretofore had eluded his grasp.

When the Queen entered, the Provost was seated opposite to a table, on which burned a superb golden lamp, and near to it stood a flask of wine. On seeing that it was a poorly-clad pilgrim who approached, he continued writing, until aroused by a scream, as the Queen, grasping his arm, pointed to a rat which fastened to her robe. Whipping it off, he tartly said,—

“All Paris knows such are my companions ; those who object to rats should not intrude on my privacy.”

As he spoke, she cast off with disgust the cloak polluted by the vermin’s touch, displaying the gorgeous dress in which she was attired.

Knitting his shaggy brows, the Provost fixed on her his keen, anxious eyes, trimmed the lamp, muttering,—

“There must be some deception : it cannot be Jane of Artois whom I see !”

“It is !—it is !” she cried passionately ; then, sobbing from terror and mortification, sank on her knees, and, in a supplicating tone, cried out,—

“Oh ! Sir Provost, hasten and conclude this interview ! would I had never consented to it ! Some spell, I fear, has been cast over me ! Oh, Sir Provost !”

“Is his Majesty ill ?” cried he.

“Oh, no,” was the reply.

“Speak then, noble lady ; surely something extraordinary must have occurred to

lead you here in this disguise. None of the Princesses ill, I hope, madam? To them I could be of no assistance.”

“ No, no, good Provost; but, O blessed Virgin, defend me—the rats!—the rats!—the rats!”

The Provost savagely beat them back to their holes, saying,—

“ Now, lady, proceed; till my call the vermin will not dare return.”

Crossing herself, she quickly said,—

“ Sir Provost, to spare my royal husband from shedding the innocent blood of the Bavarian knight, and thus involving France in a war with the whole Ghibelline party, I come to entreat of you to favour his escape. Of his love to that low-born Bona Clisson, none give credence. Philip shed tears of sorrow—I swear it by the Virgin!—at being obliged to consign the knight to death; and dearly he will esteem you for favouring his escape, and largely, good Provost, shall you be rewarded, and —”

“ Has Philip sent you here?” gravely demanded the Provost, interrupting her.

“ Certainly not,” was the answer. “ I

would not, good Provost, for my carcanet that his Majesty heard of this visit. He will love you all the better when he imputes the generous act solely to yourself—the result of your benevolence and justice."

"Hear, then," the Provost added, sternly, "madam, had not the King condemned the Bavarian when he was accused of sorcery and disrespect to the Cross, he might have lost his throne, so discontented are the people at the lenity his Majesty has shown to the abhorred Jews and other infidels. Lady, the torch of rebellion in France can only be quenched in a river of blood. So return to your bower as best befits your rank, and let the sentence of the Bavarian knight be fulfilled. For me, I feel no compassion for his fate."

"Nay, good Provost," cried the Queen, whose spirit was roused by opposition, "look, I have brought you these to win you to my purpose. Slight is the reward to that which the Holy Virgin and blessed Saints will hereafter award you for this deed. Oh! to save the innocent is an act of grace."

"Ha! but your Majesty," sneered the

Provost, "is most considerate for my soul's salvation." Still, as he spoke in bitter sarcasm, his eyes rested on the gold and jewels, while his withered fingers glided over the gems to calculate their value by his experienced touch. As he did so, he continued speaking in his sarcastic accents:—

"Your Majesty, in the vastidity of a charity, which includes even the souls of your loving subjects, overlooks one great object. This knight, who happily awakens your humanity, is to be executed to-morrow at Montfaucon, then suspended on the gibbet, where, until lately, twirled and sported in aerial movements the rattling bones of Marigni, removed, one would fancy, to make room for another victim of a frantic superstition. Now, lady, the great mass of the people, vulgarly yclept the mob, love sights. It is their pastime and favourite recreation, and being disappointed in the long-expected *auto-da-fé* of the Israelites, they hunger for some other tragedy; so were I to deceive them out of this expected sport, my own life would, in all probability, be the penalty.

And, noble lady, after the kind interest you have expressed for my soul's weal, you would not hurry it unabsolved to eternity?" he sneered.

"Sir Provost, would your death satisfy the demoniacal cruelty of the vulgar mob?" anxiously demanded the Queen, with vivacity and hope.

"Most assuredly, noble dame," he answered with bitterness, "the execution of a provost would be a delight in comparison to its novelty. A hundred knights at the least have perished in France for one provost by violent deaths; but even at your high command, I shall not mount the scaffold to pleasure the mob. So permit me to accompany you to the outer gate, soon and the warden will secure the barriers."

The Queen moved a few paces in a hesitating manner, then in a low voice, heaving a sigh, said,—

"Spare me a few moments," at the same time unclasping the superb cestus. She observed, "These jewels are of great value—more than the regalia of France. Save the

Bavarian's life, and it is yours, until released by gold at your own estimate."

The Provost's eyes gleamed with delight—a glow of rapture rushed through the frozen current of his blood—the gulf which had so long sunk between him and his hopes was passed—the goal was attained—the château and demesnes of his ancestors were within his grasp. He clasped his hands, uttered an exclamation of joy, and, forgetful of the Queen's presence, and the difficulties still to be surmounted, sunk back on his seat to contemplate in perspective his coming joy.

"Then I have succeeded," said the Queen; "the Bavarian will be released?" and she cast a wistful look on the cestus.

This address roused the Provost to reflection.

"Alas!" he said, "it wants but seventeen minutes of midnight, and at six the execution takes place. Three hours since, passing through the papal gate as I rode here, I saw the ditch of Montfaucon covered with gaping spectators, who collected there thus

early to be secure of a good view of the knight's last agony—a pleasure cheaply purchased by loss of rest."

"Sir Provost," observed her Majesty, "can you not report that the knight killed himself to escape an ignominious death? I have heard of such things among the English."

"Oh, Christ! a woman's wit never fails at invention," exclaimed the Provost, scornfully. Then turning to the Queen, "In Burgundy, your Majesty may have heard of a recreant knight having been degraded, and executed after death; and this, too, is one of the laws of our French chivalry. Now, madam, the body of this Bavarian knight is to be thrown into the Seine, just where a branch of the Marne meets it; and, in despite of the distance, the *canaille* will follow to see this form of casting the corpse into the water, it being a novel fancy of his Majesty, as well as having him executed in rich armour."

"Then," cried the Queen, with vivacity, "I can do no more; so I reclaim my cestus

and jewels ;” being secretly well pleased at not losing the treasure, and at retiring from the presence of the *Chef des rats*. However, she proudly and carelessly exclaimed, “I did think that for such treasure a person would barter even life in exchange.”

The Provost retorted, angrily,—

“ Your Majesty, I am not deceived. Willingly would you sacrifice me to save this Bavarian’s life ; but remember, from henceforth, by a word I can hurl you from your high place.” He opened the door for the terrified Queen.

Freida and Agatha, who had overheard every word, burst in ; the latter flung herself at his feet, exclaiming,—

“ Good Provost, think not so ill of the people as to believe that they would rush to see Rhadolphe—the handsomest, the most distinguished warrior in Christendom—perish by an ignominious death. Oh ! sooner would I see thousands die than this noble knight. And, kind Provost, mark me, if you favour his escape from this prison, the guerdon shall be doubled.”

The Provost gave his chuckling sneer of contempt, saying, in mockery,—

“ Ho ! three fair dames in disguise, and in my poor chamber, all for love of one knight ! Well, it is passing strange ; and, fair dames, well I wot, though abounding in gold and jewels, you want the Scriptural pearl of inestimable value—modesty and chastity. Pshaw ! pshaw ! Ho ! for my rats, though but vermin I give them the preference.”

“ Sir Provost,” cried the Queen, indignantly, “ forget you I am Jane D’Artois, Queen of France ? ”

“ It is your Majesty who has forgotten it,” he replied, bitterly ; “ also, in your ardour to save the Bavarian, you have forgotten that you are Philip’s wife. However, it is time to conclude this fruitless conference ; the higher, the more exalted the knight, the more solicitous are the multitude for his destruction. Such wealth as this might, indeed, ransom a monarch ; but there is one obstacle, and which, I fear, even gold will fail to conquer, all potent as it is.”

"Oh! name it, good Provost," cried Agatha, with vivacity.

"Simply, then, noble ladies," and his thin, withered lips extended into a hideous grin, "that by the time a man has been hung for some five minutes, though the noose be formed of silk,—nay, of the glossy ringlets of a maiden's hair,"—and he pointed to some of Freida's, which had escaped its confinement, nearly touching the ground,— "he would not give a benison for the accumulated treasures of France,—nay, of Europe. Thus far, gold will not supply the Bavarian's place on the high gibbet at Montfaucon."

"Sir Provost, this wealth would purchase prayers for the departed soul's immortal weal,—aye, throughout Christendom," said the Queen, with a grave, pious air.

He replied,—

"Your Majesty is devout; and, no doubt, would resign much to pious acts. Still, methinks, your present one savours more of passion than of piety; but this

is trifling, and time tarries not for our pleasure. Pilgrims, the fate of this Rhodolphe seems to interest and grieve you all. Strange, to see sympathy, such as yours, exist, in place of envy and jealousy, where the same object fills your hearts. Now, some two centuries ago, when the fantasies of chivalry had touched their highest point of madness, many a cavalier would have embraced the most painful death, to excite such devotion from ladies—*three*, then the Bavarian had been an object of envy, not of curiosity or compassion. For me I deeply grieve to part with this goodly treasure, so freely offered ; and if, within the space of four hours, you can by any means win over a person to supply Rhodolphe's place at the approaching tragedy, then shall the Bavarian Knight be free."

The Provost spoke in bitter sarcasm, for his soul was tortured at parting with the gold and jewels.

During this scene Freida had remained in the shade, not from any apprehension of discovery, for in Paris her death, be-

neath the desecrated tower, was fully believed ; but again, within the Provost's stronghold, her heart wept at the memory of all the woe she had there suffered, still she listened attentively, for the interest she felt in Rhodolphe was only second to what she had experienced for Edrid.

“ Ha !” she thought, “ why should not I be the victim to save Rhodolphe ? Gratitude to Dame Beatrix, affection to himself, press me forward. Thousands of my people have expired on the scaffold, or by the tortures of fire or of water, from motives far less dear or imperative, their martyrdom being merely to support OPINION ; for in every religion few are imbued with the SPIRIT of true faith. To me life has become a burden, not a blessing, my revenge seems impotent, and the passion is expiring within me. For years, though I have struggled to believe in the ancient faith of my people, and performed their rites, still it was a form, — cold, lifeless, hopeless, a grasping at shadows, with a consciousness of the idols' insufficiency. Then I am despised, hooted at,

in my poor Edrid's words ! I have no one to love, and no one to love me ; like a wild beast I fly to caves and forests to hide my dishonoured head, and, if discovered, will be committed to the flames ; and then I am restless, depressed, at the recollection of the useless falsehoods I asserted to save my truthful Edrid, and which afflicted him more than the prospect of a fearful death. Alas ! for my noble child ! ”

As these ideas flashed across Freida’s mind, yielding to the romantic generosity of her character, ever ready to sacrifice to others, she made a sign to Lady Agatha and the Queen to keep silent ; then, drawing the hood more closely over her face, and speaking in broken French with a foreign accent, lest by any chance the Provost should remember her voice, she said,—

“ Provost, I am content to die in the Bavarian’s place, and this treasure will then be yours, and death to me a release from suffering ! ”

“ As I live,” he cried, in surprise, “ I

do believe, though it be in opposition to my former convictions, that sorcery must exist ! What ! die a painful death to spare another ? — woman, you must be mad ! What ! submit to be gibbeted to save another ? It cannot be ! Your appearance is too feminine. I may not risk discovery, else I, too, would be slung up to bear the knight company, — a companionship I by no means covet. One thing is unfortunate ; that is, Philip having banished the Jews, else some Israelite, for the sake of even a momentary possession of gold, might die on the scaffold, if only to escape the flames, to which pious Christians, as an expiation for their sins, commit them. However, pilgrim, as you would die for this knight, who must be a marvel of perfection to win such love, it may be that some other equally mad can be found, for I have long discovered that heinous passions and crimes are as epidemic as physical diseases ; and in this expectation, I shall remain here until the fourth hour of the morning.”

“ True !” said the Queen, who was

secretly rejoiced at regaining her jewels, which she began to collect,—“true, the Bishop of Longris says, that, by the King’s emancipation of slaves and serfs, he is demoralising and destroying the nation. Now, see the consequence, were he not so foolish, some one of these wretches might easily be seized and executed; thus, Rhadolphe would be spared to his noble family, and France be unpolluted by the crime of his blood.”

In despair at seeing the treasure going to be removed, the Provost heeded her not; while Lady Agatha, observing the change in his countenance, exclaimed,—

“Nay, let the treasure remain here till the fourth hour, then your Majesty, if no hope of a substitute offers, it shall be restored to you! This good pilgrim,” she pointed to Freida, “will bring it to the Louvre.”

“It strikes the midnight hour,” whispered Freida. “Hasten, good Agatha! every moment is of value, for I still have hopes of saving the Bavarian’s life!” While thus speaking,

she laid her hand on the door to depart, the Queen briskly followed.

“One word, most noble and loving ladies,” sneered the Provost, “to which of you does the Knight more properly belong? if report spoke true, his father the Templar was no churl of his favours.”

He opened the door, and a servitor led the supposed pilgrims to the outer gate. Their exit from the Provost was abrupt, uncourteous, on both sides.

“He will keep my cestus!—he is a robber, and I hate him!” exclaimed the Queen, passionately. “Get me back my cestus, I say, or I will go to the King and tell him all; for I do believe some sorcery is practising against me!—I will return for my cestus, the richest treasure in France!”

She was rushing back impatiently.

“Not so, your Majesty!” cried Freida, furiously. “Think you to place your sparkling bauble in competition with the Bavarian’s life? By the light of heaven you shall not!”

“Rest assured, my royal mistress,” said

Agatha, “ your jewels are safe. The Provost’s character is well known, and all agree that, though odious and hated, the *Chef des rats* was never guilty of a positive theft ; besides, if by four we do not find a substitute, and the Provost hesitates to restore the cestus, then explain all to Philip, and impute the part you have taken in this scene to friendship towards me, and I will corroborate your testimony.”

This somewhat reassured her Majesty, and they proceeded on their way. On passing a clump of oaks, which shaded a reservoir for water, the Jongleur saw Caleb resting by it. Freida beckoned him to one side, and, drawing forth the sardonyx of four zones from her bosom, whispered,—

“ Hie thee swiftly, Caleb, to the residence of the Père Lagravare, gain secret speech of the youth Chretien, tell him that the possessor of this ring demands him, by all his vows of love and truth, to hasten to the Queen’s bower, where she awaits him, and say that a moment’s delay may be fatal to her hopes ! Speed thee well, Caleb,

and three angels of gold shall be thy reward!"

Caleb, who, like a wild animal when not excited remained in a state of stupid indolence, when roused could move with incredible swiftness, now, without speaking a word in answer, he darted out of sight; while Freida, still pondering on her complex scheme, rejoined the Queen and Lady Agatha. The former, displeased at the whole business, sullenly and haughtily walked on some paces before the others, and this gave them an opportunity of more freely conversing.

CHAPTER XIV.

"What, then, affrights thee? Am I become a monster? 'Tis true I am wild—mad—yes, mad! But I shall soon be better: I shall be better when I see blood. Attend to me, girl!"—*German Theatre.*

"FREIDA," said Agatha, in a tone of unaffected sorrow, "I see no alternative. Rhadolphe must suffer an ignominious death; and that, too, after your generous, heroic offer to fill his place. I think, if that hideous Provost did not set such a value on his hateful life, he might, for such wealth, have ventured the risk, and have had you executed. Probably the deception would not have been discovered."

"No person," coldly replied Freida, "considers himself hideous; and the old and detestable oft value life, probably because it is their only good, more than the

beautiful, the admired, and wealthy, for our whole nature is made up of conflicting passions and habits ; for me, I would have pressed the Provost to my purpose, but I felt it an useless effort. Still, Rhodolphe shall not die ! Should he, I will hurl disgrace on his persecutors, though my own life pay the forfeit, as it most surely will !”

“ Then there is still a hope ! ” exclaimed Agatha.

Freida grasped her arm, and emphatically said,—

“ There is hope, and it rests with you, and you alone. An effort,—a painful one, will be required ; but, Agatha, Rhodolphe must not die ! ”

Agatha trembled excessively, as, with faltering accents, she cried,—

“ I have not courage to die ! I am not prepared for death ! besides, my stature is even lower than yours, so the Provost would reject me. Then I am a Christian, and some fear of God is before my eyes ; and I dare not hurry, unbidden, into his divine presence ! ”

"Lady, no personal danger awaits you," cried Freida. Then, in a solemn tone, she added, "But some person must perish in the Bavarian's stead. I have selected the victim, but you alone can lead him to the sacrifice."

Agatha exclaimed, and with unaffected surprise,—

"You speak ambiguously, Jongleur, else you rave! What wealth I possessed has been already offered."

"And with success," said Freida; "it has gained over the Provost to our wishes. He has explained his position. No need of repetitions. Lady, the dial of the tower clock points to the first hour of morning; three more hence, and our efforts would prove of no avail. Agatha, there is one whom I could name that is at your command. He would die,—ay, the most painful death, to ——"

"Chretien!" muttered Agatha, as she fell back fainting in the Jongleur's arms, quickly extended to receive her.

By this time the party had reached the

palace. Freida, supporting Agatha, followed her Majesty to the apartment she called her bower, and who, in her impatience, had walked rapidly on before her companions, consequently had not overheard their conversation. While, with a peevish, dissatisfied air, she threw herself on a pile of cushions, the Jongleur, placing Agatha in the embrasure of one of the casements, revived her to consciousness. There was a silence. Then Agatha tremulously exclaimed,—

“Jongleur, what sorcery do you mean to practise? Holy Mary, defend me from demoniacal influence!”

“The sorcery of your passions and interests,” cried Freida, sternly. “The Fates have decreed that an innocent man must die; the choice rests with you, and with you alone.”

“With me!” said Agatha, timidly.
“You rave, good Freida!”

“You have but to say the word,” she interrupted, “and Chretien Lagravare will

fill Rhodolphe's place. I know the youth will obey your command even to torture—to death!" .

"It is false!" vehemently cried Agatha. "Vile Jongleur, you would tempt me to crime!" and she struck her hand with violence against Freida's breast. "Philip shall judge between us!"

"Good Freida, or^v vile Jongleur," said Freida, scornfully, "to me the words are equally indifferent; but I persist, Lady Agatha, the power rests with you to save Rhodolphe. For twice—though too distant to see the youth—have I heard this Chretien, the Père Lagravare's pupil, in the enthusiasm of passion, swear—solemnly swear—to obey your wishes, though it were to doom him to a painful death! As to Philip, if he sits in judgment, he shall learn who seduced Bona from the Louvre."

"Ha!" exclaimed Agatha; "it was you, then, who stole on our privacy in the wood of Vincennes, to watch us like a spy! Oh, well may you be termed an evil spirit!"

Alas, poor Chretien ! I but in sport encouraged his passion."

"Not as an intentional spy, lady ; but driven, as you know, to seek *shelter* from persecution, I oft wandered through the woods. Happily, the report of an evil spirit went abroad ; thus, to Superstition I owed the safety which Charity denied. In pursuing you and this Chretien, I had no object but to see the youth, whose beauty and virtue elicited admiration and respect even in this polluted city ; besides, the tones of his voice, as I overheard his passionate address to you, awakened the memory of one long dead." She sighed convulsively, adding, "Though I never could draw near enough to Chretien to see his features, still he appeared of sufficient height to deceive the multitude, if he fills Rhodolphe's place ; and, happily, the knight is to be executed in his armour. Thus, this strange caprice of royalty assists our plan."

"And think you," exclaimed Agatha, supposing that I possessed the power, "that I would doom Chretien, through his love

for me, to death? It were a crime of the darkest hue! None but a malignant could propose the act!"

"It is through our best affections," said Freida, mournfully, "that we mostly suffer. We may elude the vengeance of hatred, but seldom the allurements of love. This Chretien is amiable, but not more so than Rhodolphe. Now, if report speak true, this Chretien is of delicate health, pensive, unhappy, devoted to good works and prayer, resting his hope in heaven. Thus, to him, death will be but a release. Now Lord Rhodolphe is the very favourite of Fortune,—gay, gallant, heroic, noble, beautiful, endowed with all to make life dear. Oh! how sad to see him cut off in his very bloom and happiness by wretches such as Longris and Sir Foulque! Better, surely, for an unknown youth like Chretien to perish! Besides, Lady Agatha," whispered Freida, "to expiate the sins of others, the poor youth is doomed, by a vow of vengeance, to a violent death, from which he could not escape."

“Nay, that is false!” replied Agatha; “on the contrary, every person in Philip’s confidence knows that Chretien is the son of the Minister, Enguerand Marigni, who was saved from being included in his father’s fate by his uncle, Beauvais, and who was tenderly attached to the youth. Philip, too, is resolved to restore to Chretien the rich estates in Normandy, confiscated at the death of the Marigni, whose innocence of the crimes laid to his charge has been fully proved. Thus, Jongleur, you see the youth is not so neglected or contemptible, but is one of the first nobles in France.”

As she spoke the agitation and surprise of Freida amounted to agony; a slight convulsion shook her frame. If this was so, then Chretien, in place of being an object of vengeance, would, as the nephew of Beauvais, who had acted so generously by Edrid, and who was so esteemed by Dame Beatrix, be to her one of interest and endearment. No,—such misery could not await her! In trembling accents she demanded,—

"Can this be true, Lady Agatha? dare not to deceive me!"

"It is!" replied Agatha; "and within a few days the Primate is expected in Paris; when Philip will oblige him to acknowledge his nephew; and then, in full court, he will restore Chretien to his ancestral rights."

The Jongleur sunk her face on her spread hands, to disguise its expression of grief at the idea of plunging the nephew of Beauvais into danger; for a moment she hesitated in the fell purpose so wilfully contemplated, then she argued thus within herself,—“But surely every obligation is secondary to the interest I should and do feel for Guy D'Auvergne's son,—my lost Edrid's brother. Would that the Provost had accepted of me as a substitute: the most painful death would be preferable to my present agony. Alas! well might the Amazonian abjure me, as one accursed, doomed to works of evil; and now,—oh, sad extremity!—act as I may, I prove myself UNGRATEFUL; however, my dearest

ties as well as affections go with Rhodolphe; thus, he must not perish. Agatha is in my power, and dare not to provoke my wrath." Thus resolved Freida now stood erect before Agatha, saying,—

"Time seems to have plumed his wings,—even now the horizon is tinged with the grey light of approaching morning."

"Leave me," interrupted Agatha, in a tone of command, and trembling with agitation. "Leave me, thou serpent, who would tempt me to such an appalling crime! Jesu Maria, defend me!"

"I leave not, Lady Agatha," replied Freida, "till you hear the consequences. By being the means of preserving Lord Rhodolphe, you not only command his gratitude, but that of Dame Beatrix, and his whole powerful family. Amidst such glorious praise as they will attach to your name, the taint of levity, which now tarnishes it, will be wiped off."

"No; you would deceive," said Agatha. "On the contrary, Rhodolphe would abhor me for an act of such baseness; and, even

if I preserved his life, it might be only to see him take Bona Clisson as his bride : well I know that he loves her, so incomparable in beauty !”

“ Never ! never !” cried Freida. “ Lady, this is no time for explanation. Enough, Hubert Clisson—Bona’s father—with his own hands, executed the Lord Rhodolphe’s brother : thus, blood rises between him and her ; and art thou, lady, so dull as to suppose that Rhodolphe would spare his life by the sacrifice of another’s ? He must never learn by what means he has escaped. Once past the French frontiers he will be in safety ; then will he return, with the army of the Empire, to take revenge on France. Then will he learn that you lavished treasures to assist his escape ; nay, more, if it wins his favour, you may pass as the pilgrim who would have died in his place. Credit me, Agatha, I will not gainsay you. Grateful for such proofs of self-abandonment and affection, proudly will he sue for the favour of your hand. Oh, lady, queens will sigh with envy at the happy lot of her who is

Rhodolphe's wedded bride. None then can compete with you in bliss, for earth contains not so noble a knight."

"But poor Chretien!" sighed Agatha, as she pressed her hands on her bosom, heaving from emotion.

"There is no time for hesitation!" cried Freida, fiercely; "here we have been discussing a matter of life and death as coolly as if it were the fashion of a lady's head-gear. Agatha, now hear me: I swear that, if you do not win Chretien to the purpose, I will hie me to the King, and explain the part you have taken in Bona Clisson's seduction from the Louvre;—nay, ere the sun rises, to the whole of Paris, shall I proclaim your conduct; till your name becomes a by-word of shame and low ribaldry. And, lady, when I first devised the business, had I known that Chretien was the Primate's nephew, never would I have chosen him for the sacrifice: but now I have no other alternative."

"Vile Jongleur!" screamed Agatha; "even could you drive me to your fell

purpose, still Chretien would not consent; and, if I strove to win him, then would I be more than ever in your power.” She clasped her hands in anguish, muttering, “Accursed be the hour, Freida, when, in wild frolic, I went to the tribe’s encampment, to learn, by palmistry, my fortune. Caleb insulted me; you, Jongleur, saved me from ruin, but agitation brought on fever; for a week I remained with the tribe,—that fatal week changed my destiny, my fair name was tainted, my castle marked, and my uncle disinherited me in his anger.”

“Act to the utmost of your influence in this business,” cried Freida, changing her fierce tone to mildness; “and then you command my gratitude: and no emergency shall tempt me to betray you to ruin: —for such must be the result of an exposure. Chretien will be here presently: I have sent for him by Caleb the Suabian, from whose vile passion I protected you, and who is now in Paris.”

Agatha actually shrieked with despair.
“Is that monster in Paris?” she cried.

“Sorceress! fiend! you want to win me to murder! Oh, my evil destiny! for such a serpent to cross my path!” and she fell, with hysterical sobs, on her knees, calling on the Saints and the blessed Virgin.

“Lady Agatha,” and the Jongleur spoke with sternness, “the act is painful, but, on your side, there is no crime: you are but an instrument in my hands. Have I not said that ere we met this Chretien was doomed to a violent death? Besides, if report says true, so delicate is his health, that we but extinguish the lamp of life a few weeks sooner than it would naturally expire.”

“Pagan idolater!” exclaimed Agatha; “I will fly to Philip, and explain all, and blast your own character!”

“And behold Rhodolphe perish on the scaffold,” interrupted Freida. “But, see, her Majesty awakes from slumber; even grief for her cestus has not been sufficiently potent to keep her awake. Now I must go to Caleb, who waits in the outer court for commands. All must be rapidly prepared

for the Bavarian's escape. Pray attend : those arrangements made, I proceed on my way to the Provost's, to watch Chretien's arrival ; there I shall continue until half-past two, at which period, if he come not, I return, and, as a last effort of saving Rhodolphe, explain the particulars to Philip, though this, my miserable body, will then of necessity be consigned to the flames. So be it." She was retiring.

Agatha exclaimed,—

"Let you, at least, wait to see Chretien, and explain this dreadful business : then, if in his enthusiasm he offers up his life —" here she paused, and tears streamed down her cheeks, for the tenderness, the devotion of the neophyte rose to her memory, and she was unable to proceed from agitation.

"Such had been my intention," answered Freida ; "for my heart has long yearned to see the youth ; but in idle talk time has fled, thus I have not a moment to spare ; horses must be in readiness to bear Rhodolphe from Paris. Remember you are in

my power, and, if you act false in this business, Caleb the Suabian shall be the arbiter of your destinies."

With these words the Jongleur hurried from the apartment, while Agatha sunk back nearly insensible; a passion of tears came to her relief.

But the evil seed had been scattered in a selfish soil, where it rapidly ripened; and, quick as summer lightning, thought after thought flashed across Lady Agatha's mind,—the pride, the glory, the bliss of being the Bavarian's bride; of quitting France, and residing in Germany;—chivalric Germany,—where the scandal of her folly was not known; then the triumph over Sir Foulque. Thus love, ambition, pride, vanity, rose in array against her waning virtue. Of fixed principles Lady Agatha was incapable: something of romance, and of admiration, and of tenderness for Chretien, in despite of vanity, selfishness, and pride, still lingered in her bosom; but she soothed her conscience by reflecting, "I am encompassed within a web of difficulties, and I have no

means of escape, for, of a certainty, this Jongleur is a sorceress." The last words were uttered aloud.

"What say you?" cried the Queen, advancing to the casement.

"That I fear this vile fortune-teller, whom your Majesty's confessor, Longris, introduced into the palace, is a sorceress,—a witch."

"I am certain of it," rejoined her Majesty, with vivacity. "The wretch shall be burned. She must be a sorceress, Agatha, else how could she have bewitched me,—the Queen of France,—to steal, like a thief, to the odious Provost's, and to give the *Chef des rats* my cestus? Blessed Mary! I must have been enchanted by her spells to part with my cestus,—what I most valued on earth! And then, Agatha,"—and her Majesty of France assumed a mighty air of wisdom,—"I begin to think that Rhodolphe, too, was a sorcerer, so it is all the better he should die; so I will resume my pilgrim's dress, and with you, Agatha, hasten to the Provost's, and oblige him to

return my jewels, and yours also, my good Agatha ; and, in the morning, I will give Philip a full account of this sorceress being in Paris. But how is this ? I scent these exhalations of Oriental flowers of exquisite fragrance ; and, see, Chretien Lagravare enters. Strange, at this hour ! what can be the cause ? inquire of him quickly .”

“ Your Majesty,” cried Agatha, in confusion, “ retire for a time, and I will persuade the youth to go to the Provost’s for the jewels ; with the morning’s rising light your Majesty might be recognised.”

“ Thanks, my kind Agatha, for the suggestion,” the Queen replied, with vivacity ; “ and hasten Chretien for my cestus. How could I be so bewitched as to part with that I most value on earth ? But here he comes, and must not see me.” So saying, her Majesty hastened into an inner chamber.

CHAPTER XV.

“Oh, heavens! the ensign is just arrived. He seemed bereft of reason, seized my hand, and cried in a frightful voice, ‘Angel, angel, I may not possess thee; a curse divides us!’ and immediately rushed away.”—FREDERICK LUDWIG.

A FEW days previous to the scenes just described, the Père Lagravare, alarmed at the rapid decline of Chretien and the occasional wanderings of his mind, had proceeded to Rheims for the purpose of acquainting the Primate, hoping that he would accompany him back to Paris and take the youth under his immediate care. The wanderings which terrified the Père were of rare occurrence and varied in their character, sometimes exalting Chretien from some imaginary pleasure to the wildest ecstasy, while

at others he yielded to the gloomiest depression.

When the Père commanded him to prepare for his departure for Rheims, which he expected would soon take place, Chretien offered no opposition, though a deep sadness seized him at the thoughts of quitting Paris, and he lingered every evening over the flowers he had so sedulously cultivated, and which, till lately, had been a constant source of innocent enjoyment.

It was midnight, and Chretien was retiring to his oratory, when Caleb suddenly entered, and presenting the ring desired him to hasten as its possessor anxiously awaited his presence. Catching up a basket of flowers and rich balm, collected as an offering to the Virgin shrine, his heart beating with wild hopes, Chretien quickly followed Caleb, and being admitted at all hours into the palace, reached the apartment where, pale and trembling, Agatha waited to receive him. Advancing towards her he pointed to the ring, and with much emotion demanded,—

“Lady, why am I, whom you have so long neglected, now summoned at this late hour to your presence? and wherefore are these sordid weeds cast over your gorgeous apparel?”

These questions opened the conversation, but Agatha had formed no plan, could not even decide whether she wished the impassioned youth to fill Rhodolphe’s place on the gibbet of Montfaucon.

“Speak! noble Agatha, speak! there is some mystery!” he cried; “you seem embarrassed,—say in what can I serve you?”

“I am miserable, Chretien! for know that in the midst of the banquet’s enjoyment this evening, suddenly I heard the appalling truth that Rhodolphe has been condemned to death! nay, within a few short hours he must die!” she clasped her hands and wept aloud.

In amaze Chretien exclaimed, “Ah! say not so, the noble knight, so lofty and gay in bearing, he so admired by all, to die,—and wherefore? Oh! Lady Agatha, it were too terrible!”

“ Alas ! Chretien, he was surrounded by enemies and spies. No time now for explanations,—enough, Rhodolphe was accused of magic, of disrespect to the holy symbol of Christ’s religion, and of ——” she paused, for some sentiment of mortified pride rendered it painful to utter the name of Bona. “ In short, Chretien, as the son of the Templar, Guy D’Auvergne, who suffered for those crimes, Philip too readily admitted his guilt, and on the instant uttered the stern decision. Ah ! it was unjust—an abuse of power—an act of barbarous despotism ! ”

“ It grieves me the more,” said Chretien, in a tone of sadness, “ for, jealous of his love for you, Lady Agatha, I wilfully, rudely repelled the knight’s kindly proffered friendship ! ” he laid his hand on his brow and shuddered ; then added, “ Must he surely die ? ”

“ Oh ! Chretien,” she cried, with vivacity, “ it were a heroic,—nay, a righteous act to save the Bavarian’s life, aware of his being a stranger and innocent—I swear he is inno-

cent!—away, too, from his powerful family, who would uphold him against such despotism,—aye, to the warring with France."

"Would it be possible to save him?" demanded Chretien with interest. "Speak, lady; is there any way by which I could assist him? If but in compensation for past unkindnesses, gladly would I save the knight, casting behind me all jealousy;—ah! Agatha."

"Hear me, dear Chretien," she cried, with attention, "I need not command your secrecy; you would not betray your royal mistress and me to certain destruction."

She then, as concisely as the facts admitted, acquainted him with the Queen's and her own visit to the Provost, but suppressed all relation to Freida, concluding that the neophyte would shudder at her holding converse and placing confidence in an abhorred Jongleur, a Pagan.

"And have you, indeed, won the Provost over by gold to liberate Rhodolphe?" demanded Chretien,—"for once good has been wrought out of evil. Again I say, command

my assistance towards this gentle purpose, if, indeed, one so powerless can be of service."

Agatha's heart throbbed till she could scarcely breathe. Would she dare communicate the Jongleur's horrible scheme of sacrificing himself. Chretien had grasped her hand, somewhat sternly demanding the explanation of her agitation. No longer able to conceal her views, she said, in low accents,—

"The Provost insists that it would be impossible, except—except—in short, some person should fill the Bavarian's place to satisfy the people that the execution was effected. One there was who offered to die for Rhodolphe, but her stature was too short; the Provost dare not, for the wealth of Europe, risk discovery!"

She paused, and unconsciously raised her eyes,—they rested on the impassioned youth.

Chretien stood before her, his form erect, his arms crossed on his bosom, his cheeks glowing like fire, and his eyes,—those eyes of such peculiar beauty—fixed on her with a look of sad reproach, his lips

were closely compressed ; he made no effort to speak, but the expression of his eyes could not be mistaken. They convinced Agatha that her point, or rather the Jongleur's, was gained. It afforded no pleasure ; a pang of shame, of remorse, and of deep grief, pervaded her bosom, and her frame trembled almost to convulsions.

Again she essayed to speak, but the words died on her parched, quivering lips. Uttering a sigh, she threw herself on her knees before Chretien.

There was a pause, then Chretien withdrawing his hand, which she had clasped between hers, in a low, stifled voice, sternly said,—

“Lady, I will save you the trouble—it may be the pain, of further explanation. You have summoned me here to perform a promise volunteered under the influence of human passion. Well do I recollect having voluntarily, solemnly,—yea, on my crucifix, vowed to obey your wishes, even unto death. Nay, no tears, no excuses,” for Agatha essayed to speak. “Lady, when I, who, in the days of

great danger and of tribulation, sought God, and found him full of compassion and mercy, receiving me, a sinner, within the pale of his holy sanctuary, could afterwards, forgetful of his goodness, at the instigation of passion, quit his holy altar of purity and love, to bow in devotion before a creature of clay, I brought his vengeance upon me ; and, verily, by means of the very object for which my holy aspirations were sacrificed, I meet my just reward. Yet, Agatha," he exclaimed, with vehemence, "some mercy is shown ; for in discovering your cruelty, the dearest tie which connected me to life is severed. In the fatuity of self-love, till now I clung to the belief that I was dear to you —to you whom I so madly loved, and that it was pride, ambition, which taught you to prefer Rhadolphe—not passion. And though insuperable barriers continued to separate me from every hope of an union with you, still your preference would have been a balm to my tortured heart."

"Oh ! Chretien, hear me ; by the Virgin, I would not have you perish in Rhadolphe's

place." She fell on her knees, clasping his hand.

He dashed her off with loathing. With all his irregularated enthusiasm, he possessed a lofty spirit, an indomitable love of truth; he despised the false woman who would deceive him.

"It is not," he said, "the thought of death which appals me. For years, my life has been a scene of sorrow; but am I justified, contaminated as my soul has been by passion, to rush unbidden before my Creator? And dare I break a vow solemnly pledged on this sacred symbol of my crucified Redeemer? Oh! that I could see the pious Beauvais, he who first won me to heaven, then I could die in peace. Ha! this uncertainty is the death-struggle, not the separation, of soul and body. Son of God, direct me."

"Chretien," cried Agatha, following his steps as he paced up and down, and speaking with energy, "by the Blessed Virgin! I swear that I have been compelled to explain to you Rhadolphe's danger. I do not enforce

your promise. I do not wish you to offer yourself up as a sacrifice. Return then in peace, and let the Bavarian perish, as he is doomed, on Montfaucon's high gibbet."

"Montfaucon!" repeated Chretien, whose words, from the terrible excitement he suffered, amounted to raving; "Montfaucon! oh, I know; it is there I am to die—the King so ordered. Grieve not for me, lady," he cried, in a tone of melting tenderness; "grieve not for me," he said, mournfully, "my life must be sacrificed. Oh! on the evening you clasped my hands and called me DEAR Chretien, I could have told you all. Would you not have wept over my sad tale?" He pressed his hand to his forehead, exclaiming, "I think my mind wanders. When my brain burns in this manner, strange fancies rise before me—heed them not." Again he dashed off her hand, and continued to stride up and down the apartment.

"Then, Chretien, in the Virgin's name, I entreat, return in peace to your home, and

forget the scene of this night, and let this Bavarian die. Wherefore not?"

Not heeding her, he continued,—

"Agatha, it could not be fancy—the form was too visible. She has returned to earth to summon me away—it must be so."

"I do not understand you," she cried, in alarm.

"Lady, once every month I spend a night in prayer at the foot of Marigni's gibbet. Now, as my soul liveth, three nights since I saw the form of my dead, my cruelly murdered mother clinging to it. She beckoned me towards her, but I fled in terror. It was to warn me of my approaching fate. Thus, Agatha, it rests not with you to condemn or save me. I sinned, devoted as I was to Christ, in loving you, and the wages of sin is death."

"He raves," she thought, "poor youth! Accursed Jongleur! Blessed Virgin! sure none but a sorcerer could have devised so great a crime; and see, what is he now doing?"

For Chretien had twisted some of the flowers into his breast, and then, with wild enthusiasm, and in a voice of exquisite melody, sang forth the following words :—

“ Alas ! alas ! my mother ; the terrible vision of my fancy, shadowed forth by the finger of destiny, cannot be eluded. I must die a malefactor’s death. Woe is me ! ”

“ Dear Chretien, compose yourself,” said Agatha ; “ give me those flowers and return in peace to the Père’s.”

He smiled sadly, as he replied,—

“ In Syria, whenever a sacrifice was to be offered, the victim was adorned with flowers. The Syrian fathers had been Arabs, descended from Ishmael ; but my thoughts wander.” He looked attentively in Agatha’s face, then raising his voice to a fuller measure, chanted forth his wild strain,—

“ Ah ! woe is me ! the Cacodemon of the wood cruelly assumes the form of beauty to woo me to destruction. See ! at the altar she arises between me and the Blessed Mary. With burning pincers she tears me from

the cross ; she drags me to the fatal gibbet, and there is no help. Ah, well-a-day ! Ah, well-a-day !”

The last notes were low and thrilling ; but the first had echoed through the apartments. The Queen rushed in, exclaiming,—

“ From whence issue these divine sounds ? I tell you, Agatha, some spell has been cast around. We must on the instant send for some pious priest to exorcise the palace. Would that Gaultier of Longris was here ! ”

“ It was Chretien,” cried Agatha. “ Poor youth ! he raves. Would that your Majesty would speak some words to bring him peace ! When I address him he seems more agitated.”

“ How is this, gentle Chretien ? ” said the Queen, approaching.

“ Forgive me,” he cried, with an absent look ; “ they said I should not sing again. I will not disturb your Majesty.”

“ Nay,” she replied, “ but I love music. Strange that I never before heard you,

Chretien, sing ; and yet thy voice is full of melody, soft as a summer's breeze fanning the blooming earth, and scattering the roses' perfume around,—I pray thee, sing that air again.”

He answered absently,—

“ Noble dame, they were but a few notes which burst forth involuntarily. I remembered that my mother said none other would sing my requiem.”

“ But, Chretien, you are not ill to death ? ” said the Queen, with much sympathy.

Not attending to her words, he resumed his strain in a voice of exquisite harmony :—

“ Alas ! alas ! I was born to be the sport of a cruel destiny. Mother, daughter of an ancient race, why didst thou depart from me ? — thy secret untold. Thou boasted I was the son of a powerful chief. Ah ! woe is me ! ”

“ There is some meaning in these broken words,” cried the Queen. “ Can you, Agatha, explain them ? ”

“ He will die to spare Rhodolphe,” she

answered. “ Nay, your Majesty, look not with so much displeasure; by my soul’s weal, I have not pressed him to the deed.”

“ Said I not that there was witchcraft?” cried the Queen, in terror. “ Blessed Mary, what but a charm could have led me, Queen of France, to visit the *Chef des rats* and give him my cestus? This youth must be distraught. I will have him confined till the Bishop of Longris arrives. I must hasten to have him summoned.” So saying, the Queen retired to the inner apartment, and in which she generally slept.

Observing from Chretien’s countenance that his hallucination was passing away, Agatha was addressing him, when, startled by hearing a heavy step in the corridor—could it be Philip?—she scarcely knew whether to dread or wish for the King’s presence. The person entered, and, with unspeakable horror, she beheld Caleb the Suabian,—he who had dared to express towards her his fierce, unhallowed passion! Could Freida have sent him to seize her person in the event of Chretien not con-

senting to their diabolical scheme? Favoured by the partial gloom of the chamber, she glided towards the door through which her Majesty had just passed, entered, and then, with trembling hands, secured it from within, leaving the distracted Chretien to his fate.

Caleb had not seen her, his large, unmeaning eyes wandered around, amazed at the gorgeous splendour of the apartment. Never before had he witnessed such magnificence. It diverted him from his purpose, till, attracted by hearing Chretien in a loud voice chanting forth,—

“Alas! alas! why was I born to be the sport of a cruel destiny? Mother of my love, why, oh! why, didst thou close thy heart to the true God, sealing our *eternal* separation? Ah, well-a-day! ah, well-a-day!”

“Now,” cried Caleb, grinning with delight, “but that is a sweet note! Pity to silence it, but we must be to the Provost, or the gates will be closed, and I lose my gold angels,—pretty things!—ha! ha! ha!”

Here he snapped his fingers, cutting a

pirouette expressive of delight; he then threw a large, dark mantle over Chretien's neophyte dress, placing the cowl on his head. In the confused state of Chretien's mind, he yielded without resistance, softly saying,—

“I would bid her I love adieu ;” and advancing towards the door through which Agatha had disappeared, but the Suabian interfered.

“Have I not said that the gates would be closed ?” vociferated Caleb, urging Chretien forward with a giant's strength through the different passages, till they reached the outer court, where a steed was in readiness. Here, breathless from the hurry, and dreading the return of his wanderings—for poor Chretien was fully aware of his mental derangement — while Caleb assisted him to mount, he contrived to swallow some drops of his balm, rubbing it over his temples and hands. Its restorative power was instantaneous, and with Caleb he proceeded rapidly till they reached the Provost's gate. Three knocks on a small portal cut in one

of the massy leaves was the appointed signal. Standing on the threshold, Caleb pointed to a person clad as a pilgrim, who, running rapidly forward, beckoned to him to pause.

“It is Agatha,” he thought, “coming to claim her ring. When I vowed to obey her commands, even unto death, I promised to restore it.”

By this time Freida—for it was she—came near. He clasped her hand, exclaiming, as he placed the ring within it,—

“Cruel woman! by all my hopes of redemption, I forgive you!”

Ere the Jongleur could answer, the Provost, who stood inside, drew Chretien forward, closing the portal with its heavy chains.

CHAPTER XVI.

“Dreadful sounds I hear,
And the dire form of hostile gods appear.”

DRYDEN’s *Virgil*.

“Though myself be a full vicious man,
A moral tale yet I you teller can.”

CHAUCER.

CHRETIEN stood in the Provost’s secret chamber, its gloom little relieved by the grey dawn of early morning struggling to force its sickly beams through the high casement, here and there shedding a cold streak of light over the polish of the oaken floor. The flame emitted by the golden lamp extended no farther than the table; but it served to illuminate the pure brilliants which rested on it, their sparkling lustre forming

a strange contrast to the sordid furniture around.

The Provost having secured all without, now entered and advanced towards Chretien, whose face was still closely shaded by the cowl, which, on quitting the Louvre, Caleb had drawn over it.

“ Remove that covering from your face,” said the Provost, sternly, “ and say who are you.”

With a shudder such as Bona’s lark experienced when it saw the goshawk pouncing towards it, Chretien drew back the cowl; but with a sentiment of loathing he could not control, turned away his head as he answered,—

“ Provost, I betray not my name. No torture shall win it from me !”

“ Are you aware of the purpose for which you have been brought here ?” demanded the Provost. “ Youth, answer without equivocation !”

“ To die !” replied Chretien, in a voice of decision. “ To die in place of Rhodolphe the Bavarian ! It grieves me to think that,

by a fatal vow, I doomed myself to fill a caitiff's place, for none other would shield his life by so vile a plot. So much does it marvel me, that, only my reason and fore-knowledge deride the possibility, I would think some enchantment had been cast around!"

"Ho!" sneered the Provost, "I can expound that mystery without the aid of magic. The Knight Rhodolphe is as romantic,—that is to say, as great a visionary as yourself; and could he comprehend the means by which he is to be emancipated, he would suffer a thousand deaths before he would purchase life on such terms. Then I would lose this rich guerdon!" he pointed to the heap of gold coins and jewels, and giving his hideous sneer, added, "Know you not this treasure was granted by the Queen and two of her handmaidens to win back the knight, the beauty of whose person pleased their tender fancies? Much do I rejoice that Mammon, not Venus, was my chosen idol. Idols all men have. Wisdom consists in their choice. Ha! ha! ha! While

our good King slumbers in blessed security, his virtuous Queen robs the crown of its most precious jewels, and offers up a human victim to her lawless passion. Of a truth, the Bavarian was a most successful hero ! Three dames—or damsels, I know not which—conquering jealousy, united to save him,—nay, more, one of those, clad in pilgrim's weeds, offered to perish on the scaffold, if so she could save the Bavarian's life, by immolating her own !”

Chretien groaned aloud, and, clasping his hands, exclaimed,—

“ Oh, how intense, how devoted, must not be the love which led to such results ! Happy Rhodolphe !” he muttered to himself ; “ and you, Agatha, have only in despair consigned me to a trial to which you would have yielded your own person ; and this pleads your forgiveness with me, your victim !”

“ Youth,” cried the Provost, “ your grief is natural ! Acquaint me by what arts these women fascinated you to yield up your life, a sacrifice to their vile passions. Far as I

can judge, by your averted countenance, and the shade in which you have placed yourself, your person is noble enough to gain their approval ; and I would swear by these," he struck the jewels, " that it was through love you have been seduced!"

Chretien interrupted him, saying,—

" Provost, it was love, hopeless as guilty, which led me here ; some consolation I find in hearing that Rhodolphe is not unworthy of the sacrifice ; and to me death will be a release from much sorrow. One request, Provost,—you will not refuse,—send for some holy man to assoil my soul and grant forgiveness, if I sin in thus dying."

As he spoke a water-clock on the mantelpiece, with a steady, heavy sound, struck three.

" Later than I thought," cried the Provost, in hurried accents. " Now, young man, answer me distinctly,—Are you content to mount the high gibbet of Montfaucon, and to die in place of Rhodolphe the Bavarian ? to die with a calmness and sternness of purpose which will awaken no suspicion ? Re-

member, if you now relent, you quit this place in safety, merely swearing not to betray what has passed; but, mark me, ten minutes hence, and for you there will be no escape."

"I am content to die. I have sworn it!" replied Chretien.

"Then Rhodolphe shall be instantly released," cried the Provost; "and, though not much given to the doctrine of demoniacal possession, I feel assured that some spirit of darkness rules you to its evil purpose. So be it." Then the Provost gave his chuckling laugh, and, pointing to an old grey rat, which was stealthily creeping forward, said,— "I leave you now to make an acquaintance with the familiars of the tomb to which Love hastens you."

Chretien shuddered.

* * * * *

In a short time the Provost returned; addressing Chretien, he said,—

"The Bavarian is safe: I led him unobserved beyond the outer gate. Well was his escape provided for,—a nobler steed

never met my eyes than one which a fantastically dressed giant held in readiness for his use ; and better rider never mounted, for swift as an arrow from its bow was the Bavarian's flight. I wot little rest will man or beast find till they pass the frontier. Well, of a truth, no friend like a woman, where she truly loves :—no half measures then,—no want of generosity,—no dread of consequences ;—no, though the powers of earth and of hell were marshalled against her ! Now, youth, follow me.”

“ One word, Provost,—under what pretence did you release the condemned knight ? —this I would know.”

“ Pretence to release a man from prison and death ! why, youth, you must, as I have said, be possessed to ask such a question !”

“ Still I would know,” persisted Chretien, eagerly.

“ Know, then,” replied the Provost, “ I found the Bavarian engaged in prayer ; addressing him, I said, ‘ The Queen, compassionating your misfortune, averring your innocence, and placing faith in your

virtuous love, has won me over to loosen you from prison ; all is in readiness for your escape from Paris ; but quickly doff your armour, and put on this burgher's dress. Nay, Lord Rhodolphe, you loiter, a few moments more and it will be too late even for Royal favour to assist you.' Now, of a truth, no need of pressing,—quickly as I have already told you, fled the knight, promising me rich guerdon."

While thus speaking, the Provost had led Chretien on to the very chamber which, three years previously, had been occupied by the Jongleur's ill-fated son, Edrid. Now, as then, its altar was lighted by four wax tapers.

Heretofore Chretien, upheld by conflicting sentiments, had preserved an appearance of composure, but, on seeing that altar, some rush of memory pressed on his soul ; he uttered a mournful cry, clapped his hands, and, flinging himself before the shrine, burst into a passion of tears.

"It is too late!" furiously screamed the Provost ; "the Bavarian gone, your repent-

ance is unavailing. Youth, you came here by your own free act, and now, coward-like, after all your boasting, would shrink from the trial, involving me in ruin."

"Leave me, Sir Provost,—leave me!" exclaimed Chretien; "and let me in peace devote these my last hours to God; the blessed Redeemer, who enlightened my soul when it was involved in darkness, may now again shed over my broken spirit the balm of mercy and forgiveness, and receive my repentance. Worthless and wandering as has been my spirit, still my faith in Him was sincere; and, Sir Provost, as you hope for his mercy, let some holy man be sent for."

"Mark me, youth, within two hours you must proceed to the place of execution. I now leave you; pray, if thou wilt, but against my return let me find you clad in Lord Rhadolphe's armour:—strange device to render the tragedy more imposing to the people. And, having chosen your part, pious youth, as you seem, be manly in your bearing." Saying these words, in an agitated

tone, the Provost retired ; but scarcely had he reached the end of the narrow serpentine corridor when he paused, for a strain of rich, sacred music burst upon his ear. It was the *Regina Cæli*, a hymn sung at Easter in honour of our Lady : sublime, thrilling, it elevated the thoughts to heaven. On hearing this hymn a deadly sickness pervaded the Provost ; cold drops gathered on his withered brow.

“ Can it really be,” he thought, “ that sorcery is no fable ? Yet, never since the Jongleur’s son was here did such music fall on my ear.” He hurried back to his prisoner, but paused at the door to gaze on Chretien, who had cast off his pilgrim’s cloak and hood ; and, as he knelt, in the ecstasy of devotion, before the shrine, his neophyte’s dress, his rich waving hair, his head thrown back, his eyes of peculiar beauty cast upwards, while his half-parted lips breathed forth another hymn composed—as was his wont—under the inspiration of the moment ; and, as before observed, it was the voice, not the words, which lent the charm to Edrid’s.

“ Hail, sainted Mary, glorious Queen
Of Heaven’s bright angelic choir,
Mother of Him who died to screen
All mortals from eternal fire.

Mother of Him who, born to save,
Viewed sinners with a pitying eye,
And with his latest breath forgave
His murderers on Calvary.

Mother of Jesus, deign to pour
One bright, consolatory ray,
Which may illumine this gloomy hour,
And bitter thoughts of death allay.

Breathe o’er my soul the breath of life,
Until no thought of earth remain ;
Remove those doubts, this mental strife,
And I will love my dungeon chain.

Give me, oh give thy blessed aid
To calm those unavailing sighs,
And gleams of seraph hosts arrayed
In never-ending Paradise.

Away, away, this mortal woe ;—
Come, hope and high celestial joy :
Borne on thy healing wings, I go
To heaven and immortality.”

“ By the powers of darkness ! ” groaned
the Provost, “ this youth has the very coun-
tenance and voice of the Pagan’s son, whom,

from my tower, I saw perish at Montfaucon, and his body cast into glowing flames.” With this he shook Chretien by his arms, exclaiming, “Demon—spirit, what or who art thou that thus assumest the likeness of the dead? I will discover this mystery, — on the instant, else, you die!”

“Leave me, Sir Provost!—I say, leave me!—I am called Chretien Lagravare!—a few moments, and the veil between me and eternity is to be torn asunder, then the great mystery of our being will be spread out before me,—leave me, then, to make my peace with God. Again I entreat a confessor! As thou hopest for redemption, refuse me not,—it were a demon’s part to deprive the dying of sacrament!”

“For me, I seek no redemption,” the Provost exclaimed, “but escape from the danger with which these cursed women have encompassed me,—me who ever loathed, abhorred the sex, now madly to have become the tool of these wretches,—ladies of high degree, forsooth!—pshaw!”

He descended to his chamber to gaze at

his treasure, but the scenes of the evening had wrought a strange change in his mind. Hitherto, though the Provost had been a disbeliever—a mocker of all good—an extortioner—a cruel man, delighting in human misery, still he considered himself guiltless so far as he had only succumbed to the crimes of others, even to the awful one of working out the destruction of the Templars and Marignis, acquitting himself under the excuse that he only acted in his official capacity, and by the commands of his superiors; but now, for gold, he had sold the life of an innocent youth, whose enthusiasm, bordering on insanity, rendered the crime of sacrificing him less excusable; and now again pressed on the Provost's heart a belief that the youth must be possessed by some spirit of darkness, and who, no doubt, would work out his (the Provost's) ruin, by some malignant means,—this horrible idea, with a knowledge of how dear Chretien Lagravare was to the King, filled him with apprehension. There are shocks which paralyse the mind, leaving the body unimpaired, as,

on the contrary, the body is often struck with palsy, while the mind retains its full faculties. Over that of the Provost a strange change passed. He entered the temple of his idol,—the golden lamp lay on the ground, beneath it was the old grey rat quite dead ; probably, hungering for the oil, it had pulled down the lamp, and thus been scalded to death. It was a simple circumstance, but under the depression he suffered it seemed to the Provost a certain omen of ill. He grasped at the cestus, and strove to cheer himself by admiring its brilliancy and calculating its value. After years of anticipation he had reached the long-desired goal of his wishes,—the prize was within his grasp, the fruits of industry, of crime, of long-suffering, of selfishness, spread out before him, but no joy accompanied their possession ; on the contrary, his soul was full of bitterness and woe ; the carnal passion of Avarice* was glutted to satiety by a sudden accumulation of wealth, but Mammon,

* Dante places Avarice among the carnal passions.

the fiend so oft invoked, had fled, leaving his worshipper without further object or hope ; the Provost's countenance, always pallid, became cadaverous ; he raised the golden lamp, "It was my first treasure," he muttered, "and in being crushed brought death to that old rat,—and all the others have fled ! False vermin all ! superstitious fools would find in this accident a type of their own fate !" he gave a forced laugh, then his memory turned back to the evening when the lamp came into his possession ; the number of years that elapsed, his own amounted to fifty in time, but to a hundred in feeling. He felt, indeed, that he was past all enjoyment ; he groaned aloud as if for the first time this stern truth had struck on his memory.

Hoping once more to rouse within him the fading passion of avarice, he descended to the dungeon, and looked into chest after chest full of his treasure, but, alas ! the desire no longer existed. Avarice would not revive, every spark was extinguished, and the Provost scoffed and howled like a demon. The fury passed off. "Should I

die," he muttered, "and if my deception is discovered I surely must—none shall enjoy the fruits of my madness, for I hate the world, and gladly would double the load of evil and death, which is man's inheritance!" So placing his long-sought treasure on the brink of the well, he worked the pump, chuckling, and screaming, and gibing, as he heard it driven through the deep waters. After this strange act he ascended; just then a loud blast issued from the horn which hung to the inner gate, and some of his serjeants entered, announcing that his Majesty had sent the Bishop of Paris to shrive the Lord Rhodolphe, also a strong guard to protect the litter on which the Bavarian was to be placed and conveyed to Montfaucon.

"It is well," cried the Provost, mastering his agitation, and stepping forward to receive the good old prelate, whose countenance beamed with a benevolence and devotion divine in their expression. Withdrawing from the Provost's attempted courtesy, the Bishop coldly said,—

"It is nearly five, and six the hour appointed for the execution. Guide me at once to the criminal."

"I thought it still later," said the Provost, in evident agitation. "Reverend Sir, know you Lord Rhodolphe?"

"I have never seen him," was the answer; "my age and duties are such that I rarely visit the gay scenes, where alone I could have met the warlike Bavarian."

Somewhat assured by this observation, he said to the Bishop,—

"With your permission, I shall precede you by some moments to the prisoner; mine is an ungrateful office forced on me by royal pleasure, for, by right, I am not bound to guard criminals within my stronghold." So saying, the Provost hurried on, cursing his own folly and muttering, "I laughed, and wondered when, seduced by women, this enthusiastic boy consented to die. But here am I in mature age, driven on by women, they whom I ever loathed and abhorred, to risk my life; and now that I despise their

gifts and see my danger, it is too late to retreat. Deceitful sex, spawn of the serpent, I spit at you,—curse you !”

On entering the oratory, the Provost found Chretien fastening on Rhodolphe’s suit of armour, and, though his form was considerably slighter than the Knight’s, still, being placed over his own dress, it fitted well. When thus equipped, he bore a strong resemblance to the Bavarian.

“ Ha ! but this is wonderful,” thought the Provost. “ This youth seems to possess the Proteus’ power of assuming the likeness of others ; just now, and he seemed the Pagan’s son. Well, good arises, for to all he will appear as Rhodolphe.”

Speaking aloud, he said,—

“ Chretien, you entreated for a holy priest !—know you that the Bishop of Paris comes to shrive you ? Say, has he before acted as your confessor ?”

“ I have never seen him,” replied Chretien. “ Sir Provost, for this kindness, I forgive you much evil towards me,

and pray to the saints to uphold you in the hour of need."

"Happily the penitent has never before seen the Bishop; so far, I am safe," thought the Provost. "But I like not this confession!" Grasping Chretien by the arm, he exclaimed, "Swear that no rite of your Church or persuasion of the holy prelate shall win you to betray our secret! Should you, the Queen and those who accompanied her would be consigned to deaths horrible as those which Philip le Bel had inflicted on his daughters-in-law for their adultery,—a punishment so horrible, that even the Franks, so remarkable for cruelty, heard and trembled."

"Fear me not," cried Chretien; "I murmur not at my fate, and with firm resolve will meet it!"

"But swear!" cried the Provost.

Ere Chretien could answer, the Bishop, elevating his crucifix, entered, and, in an imperative tone, commanded the Provost, who dare not disobey, to retire.

It was a short shrive which the Bishop granted ; for, within a quarter of an hour, he and Chretien descended to an ante-room, where they found the Provost in waiting, with two serjeants wearing their green and red hoods ; these serjeants then placed manacles on the prisoner's hands, drew down the vizor of his helmet, then placed him on a litter, and, surrounded by the guard, proceeded with rapid pace to the place of execution.

“I am safe !” exclaimed the Provost, as he saw the mistaken enthusiast hurried off; and, not sparing a sigh of pity to the youth’s hapless fate, but enjoying his own safety, he bounded and chuckled about like a demoniac, then he climbed up to the highest tower of his stronghold, thinking time tedious, until the victim’s struggles were over. On gazing at Montfaucon he was surprised to see that, besides the vast multitude which ever delighted in attending the pastime of an execution, were the fraternity of the Franciscans and Domi-

nicans. “Well,” he murmured, “the whole details of this business are passing strange! During twenty years that I have filled one legal post or another in Paris, nothing so extraordinary ever came before me; and so the pious mendicants—impostors all—for once forgetting their disputations, meet in harmony to enjoy the treat of a NOBLE’s ignominious death!” Then screaming out, as if addressing the people, he exclaimed, “Oh, you besotted fools!—how you would wonder, and quarrel, and curse, did you but know that it is your admired Chretien whom you yclept an angel of mercy that ascends the scaffold in lieu of the condemned Rhodolphe, a stranger and a Bavarian! Unreflecting multitude, there is no novelty in the business! I, your Provost, tell you, and your priests cannot gainsay me, that the sacrifice of innocence on the shrine of power, lust, and ambition, is a daily occurrence!”

Then rubbing his hands and sneering; but still oppressed with a bitter sad-

ness, his frame shivering from the cold air which blew so fresh over the lofty tower, not waiting to see the conclusion of the tragedy, he descended to his solitary chamber.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ ‘ Ah me ! oh, Satan ! ’ loud exclaimed
Plutus, in accents hoarse of wild alarm.

* * * *

‘ Peace,’ he cried,
‘ Cursed wolf ! Thy fury inward on thyself prey
and consume thee ! ’ ”—DANTE’S *Hell*.

OUR tale now takes us back to the period when Freida hurried to the Provost’s gate, in expectation of seeing Chretien—a wish she had long formed. Though disappointed, as his face was closely muffled, still, as when mistaking her for Agatha, he placed the sardonyx in her hand, in low, sad accents pronouncing his forgiveness and bidding her a last farewell, the tones of his voice, and yet more, an exquisite fragrance which floated around his person, brought back, with fearful distinctness, the memory of her

lost Edrid. Thus gently had he ever spoken, and that rich perfume, peculiar to the East, she had never before inhaled since her departure from Jaffa.

While hesitating in what terms to address one whom by her arts she was consigning to immediate death, Chretien was pulled into the court, and its well-secured portal shut him from her view. Then being seized by a deep grief, aggravated by remorse, relenting her fell purpose, she knocked at the Provost's gate. From agony, her mind became confused. Now she called wildly on Edrid, declaring his innocence, then on Chretien, thus intermingling them in her idea as if they were one and the same person. But none answered, and the repose of night was only interrupted by her frantic exclamations.

As hopeless she turned away, a dizziness seized her ; loud hissings, resembling the roaring of waters, ran through her ears ; then came sounds like the groans of the dying, or the wailing of condemned spirits. Convulsive shiverings shook her

frame, whirling her round and round, then urging her rapidly forward. Instinctively she stretched out her arms to catch at some support; they embraced a colossal cross of great antiquity, being cut out of red granite, and which rose some short distance from the Provost's stronghold.

Prostrate at the base of this blessed symbol of redemption, lay the form of Freida, torpid from the exhaustion which succeeded the violent struggles of her convulsions. The faculties of her mind, however, were unimpaired, and fully sensible to the extraordinary events of the past evening, and in which she had acted so prominent and fearful a part.

Suddenly a strong gust of air, redolent of sweets, bearing on its wings wild and mournful music, rushed with the force of a whirlwind through her frame. Shudderings succeeded, then she was conscious of divine inspiration, which exhilarated and exalted her soul to a transcendent degree. Catching up the solemn chant of harmony, she who had never before sung in a righteous cause,

burst forth into loud hallelujahs ; the voices of hovering angels intermingled in the holy theme of thanksgiving to the Author of all good. A slight shower, which now fell, refreshed her languid frame, enabling her to rise. Looking upwards, she beheld the sun's broad disk just appearing above the horizon, and by his glorious presence dispersing the dark gloom of night. And now from St. Martin's Church—that holy fane where the light of the Gospel was first revealed to the enraptured Edrid—sounded the first morning bell to rouse the righteous to early prayer. Freida thought of Edrid, and, reclining against the cross, wept aloud.

From that period, though preserving her identity, the Jongleur was conscious of being under divine influence—a blessed, but passive instrument, chosen by an all-directing power to work out for others the great end of salvation. The demons of Pride, of Anger, and Revenge, which heretofore she had so sedulously nurtured within her bosom, were exorcised, and their place filled by the angels of Mercy and Truth. Relieved from

the terrible belief that the dark principle of Evil rose triumphant over that of Good, thus granting Sin the pre-eminence—a creed so offensive to the attributes of an all-creating, all-ruling, and most beneficent Creator. While she bowed in humiliation at the foot of the cross, her heart expanded in charity, love, and hope for her species. Thus, by the manifestation of the Spirit, having burst through the dark prejudices which had for years clouded and warped her fine intellect, which had ever delighted in Scriptural truths, Pagan as she was, in an ecstasy of bliss, the Jongleur's soul seemed wafted to heaven, holding communion with the blessed Saints.

“Oh! my Redeemer!” she cried, as tears of sincere penitence fell down her face, “from henceforth thy will, not mine, be done. Even in the eleventh hour, through thy grace, I may work in the vineyard of thy glory.”

Now, from that hour to the latest period of her existence, Freida averred, that from thenceforth she solely acted under the direc-

tion of some mysterious influence, which urged her on by impulses over which she had no control, as a ship, struggling through the troubled surges of ocean, although it be replete with life, is still guided by the pilot's hand, obeying its every movement, and thus reaches the haven of its hopes.

Full of divine inspiration, as Freida rose from the cross, she saw a horseman riding by; beckoning him forward, she entreated to be immediately borne to the Louvre. The man obeyed without hesitation, as she handed him a gold angel.

On reaching the palace, and beholding lights gleaming from the Tapestry Chamber, Freida concluded that Philip had risen thus early, probably being too much excited about the coming execution to find repose. Speaking boldly to the sentinel, she said,—

“ Acquaint his Majesty I bear a message of importance relative to the Lord Rhodolphe, which requires immediate attention.” While waiting the sentinel's return, she saw in the distance Gaultier pass on towards the

Queen's apartments. "It must be some business of consequence which summons the confessor at this unusual hour," she reflected.

A few moments after, and Freida was admitted to the King's presence : with him was the Bishop of Paris.

Merely announcing herself as a pilgrim, in a few words she explained that the Provost had accepted of a bribe to emancipate Rhodolphe ; and to escape detection, that Chretien Lagravare was to be executed in the Bavarian's place. "The hurry of the moment," she remarked, "forbade her entering into the particulars of this strange business."

We shall pass over the astonishment and indignation of the King at receiving this extraordinary intelligence from the supposed pilgrim. In his fury he would have summoned the Provost and submitted him to torture, if he refused to confess from whom he had received the bribe. Happily, his Majesty at length yielded to the representations of the Bishop, who explained that the

present object was to save Chretien from a painful death, for which purpose no time was to be lost, as the hour of execution approached.

And now a plan of proceeding was quickly arranged ; in pursuance of it, Freida bore a message, by his Majesty's desire, to the confraternities of the Cordeliers and Dominicans, commanding their presence at the execution of the Bavarian knight. There his Majesty would meet and explain the motive of this unusual proceeding. He then sent for Gaultier, the lately-elected Bishop of Longris, and who presumed not to disobey, as he had just learned from her Majesty the imprisonment of Chretien ; though perfectly innocent on that head, he foresaw that it would lead to a full discovery of the intrigues he and Sir Foulque had carried on for the destruction of Rhodolphe, and whose escape in a manner so unprecedented might be deemed miraculous. However, disguising his alarm, mounting his charger, he rode after the King, preserving his usual haughty and warlike bearing.

Philip rode in the direction of the Provost's. On nearing it, in a stern voice he said,—

“ Bishop of Longris, enter, and tell the Provost that we require his and your attendance at the place of execution, where we are now proceeding on an affair which demands speed.”

“ The discovery is already made,” thought Gaultier, as he saw, though keeping at a respectable distance, that a guard was in attendance on him, no doubt to prevent his escape. “ One hope alone remains,” he sighed. “ For the time being, the Provost's interest and mine are so far amalgamated, that we must either fly or perish together; for no doubt, whoever has betrayed Rhadolphe's escape has also discovered the part I took in enticing Bona away when under the royal protection, and placing her in the power of Freida, who, I much fear, in the performance of her vow of vengeance, may have immolated the hapless maiden on some Pagan altar; and though I would have secured her from the

inheritance of D'Evreux, still it might have been done without an act of cruelty or death. Within this ancient stronghold, there must be many secret places. I have heard report that there are subterranean passages leading to a great distance ; with these the wary Provost must be acquainted. Could we once find egress through them, bearing with us the long-hoarded and heretofore useless gold of the *Chef des rats*, its potent influence would insure us assistance in making our rapid flight out of the French dominion. Again in Natolia, I would defy them all ! ”

Flushed with this vain hope, Gaultier hurried into the Provost's secret chamber, but started back in horror at the sight which met his view. The excitement of the night, and the *positive* guilt into which he had been allured by his rapacity after wealth, had proved too much for the faded health of the *Chef des rats*. His mind admitted the fearful idea, that when Mammon, the evil spirit to whose guidance he had for years submitted, fled from the sanctuary of his bosom, a legion of devils had entered.

Possessed by this madness, the miserable wretch was bounding about and howling like a wild beast,— now tearing at his clothes, now trampling on the treasure for which he had sold his immortal soul.

Recognising the cestus of invaluable gems, Gaultier snatched it from the maniac, and thrusting it within the folds of his doublet, looked wildly around for some door of escape; but a party of the guards rushed in, and saying, “His Majesty was impatient of the delay,” he was obliged to mount his horse and follow, while they forcibly dragged on the Provost to Montfaucon ; at either side of whose gibbet the royal guards had formed into a crescent ; behind them was a vast multitude of people ; in the front was Philip, accompanied by his brother, the Earl of Marche, and the Primate, who, with the Père Lagravare, had, the preceding evening, arrived from Rheims to witness the Bavarian’s execution for communion with evil spirits. Just then the litter with Chretien drove up. Springing from their steeds, the Earl of Marche and the Primate, placing themselves

at his side, assisted him to ascend to the top of the gibbet, where the executioner, with the horrible implements of death, awaited to perform his detestable office.

At this moment a flourish of many trumpets resounded throughout the place, after which heralds loudly proclaimed the criminal act of the Provost, who, for a bribe, had emancipated the condemned Bavarian, supplying his place with the guiltless Chretien, who, in the meantime, had cast aside the armour, and, from his high elevation, in the white dress of a neophyte, stood confessed before the wondering people; and to all who were too distant to hear the herald, the friars had explained the Provost's deception, awakening such a fury against him, that but for the intervention of the guards, the wretched maniac would have been torn to pieces. As it was guilt so fully proved, not requiring the form of a trial, the Provost was forcibly dragged up the gibbet, and instantly executed. So perished the Provost of Paris, the worshipper of Mammon!

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Vengeance, king—I pray thee, vengeance:
Do I ask the right in vain?”—*The Cid.*

WE now return to Bona, whom we left seated on the broken column in the Apostle's grove. When, in despite of her entreaties, Freida left her, to go in quest of Caleb, Bona, finding herself alone in that unhallowed spot, and which she devoutly believed to be the haunt of evil spirits, every limb quivering with undefined terror, she thrust her hand into her bosom to draw forth her crucifix, but perceiving that in her confusion she had pulled out the fragment of one that had been broken when the wolves attacked her palfrey, and considering it as an unlucky omen, she cast it away, and sank on her knees. Ere her

trembling lips could utter an Ave Maria, she was startled by hearing wild music, accompanied by a loud hum of voices, some singing, some shouting,—in short, bursting forth into every indication of blasphemous rude mirth; then advanced a party of dancers and masquers, hideous in their grotesque disguise and movements; several goats, ornamented with ribbons, their horns having been gilt, were dragged along to the sound of dulcimers and tambourines. Some of the revellers came astride on broomsticks, others carried cats in their arms,—in short, a general frenzy seemed to have seized the party. Bona, being happily shaded by the laurels, they passed on, performing their antics, without seeing her, whose dismay sets all description at defiance:—she clasped her chaplet to her heart, cold dews bedewed her frame; she essayed to repeat the word of prayer, but her parched tongue was incapable of utterance; just then Ion the hound rushed towards her, bounding about, and licking her hands. It was something she had seen on hallowed

ground, she returned its caresses ; it struggled to escape, and dashed down a walk running parallel to the one where the Suabian Caleb and his party performed their abominable rites of the devil's sabbath. She dared not raise her voice to call back the hound, so flew after it, and seeing it make a rush through a hedgerow, pushed forward, and, though her arms were torn till blood streamed from them, and her dress partly severed from its body ; tearing off the shreds which impeded her progress, onward she pushed through what had once been an avenue, but, from years of neglect, the branches were then interwoven. It led to a meadow ; crossing it, she paused not till she reached one of the most ancient fountains in Paris,— its water, pure as crystal, sprang upwards to catch the early beams of the rising morning, and around a paling which marked its bounds tranquilly reposed several of the houseless Parisians.

Oh, how fresh and delicious blew the air over her fevered cheeks ! She who had just escaped from demons now knelt before

the true God, his glorious light shone around, she felt his presence; it was heavenly bliss—rapture, after escaping from the haunt of fiends. Sincere was the matin she poured forth in gratitude.

That morning to Bona was blessed,—while hesitating whether to brave her father's displeasure, by returning to his home, or to seek Philip, and relate her strange adventure, a party of students, seeing her in the dress of one of the Sorbonne,—for she had folded the mantle so as to disguise her torn and feminine dress,—they proposed that the learned student (the Sorbonne even then was celebrated) should join their party, who were proceeding to Bourges.

Gratefully she accepted the offer.

“Blessings have attended me, through the divine Mary and the Saints of heaven,” she reflected.

We pass over a journey unmarked by events. On reaching Bourges she immediately proceeded to the Convent of St. Mary’s, near the old Cathedral,—the scene of her birth, and for years the saintly home

of peace and virtue ; and each grateful and pleasurable emotion increased when she learned that the friar, Francesco D'Esculo, was in Bourges, and immediately she sent to apprise him of her arrival. Unhappily, all his efforts to discover the lost parchments connected with Bona's heritage had failed.

Accustomed from infancy to the gentle attentions of the friar, experiencing neither fear nor restraint in his presence, Bona had ever confided in him,—and now explained the motives which had tempted her to fly her father's protection, and every subsequent event, until her arrival the preceding afternoon at Bourges.

The comprehensive mind of D'Esculo at once understood that the Bishop of Longris and Sir Foulque had devised some dark scheme to remove Bona,—the only claimant between Sir Foulque and the D'Evreux estates ; he discovered, too, by the praises and blushes of Bona, that Lord Rhodolphe had gained on her affections. Her account of Freida was the part of her information most incomprehensible ; as to the evil

spirits, he laid them down to an excited imagination. The friar reflected that Freida, most probably, was engaged to work out some ill to Lord Rhodolphe, as he also stood in the path of Sir Foulque's fortunes. No time, then, was to be lost, so, quitting the nunnery, he hastened off to consult the Archbishop of Bourges. Just at the period a great festival was being held in the city.

He found the Archbishop in a state of much anxiety,—some of those coming to attend the festival brought report that Lord Rhodolphe was to be gibbeted for sorcery, or had been. It was quickly arranged that the friar should proceed to Munich, to be with the Lady Beatrix, in the event of this sad news proving true; and, as an excuse, he was to bring Bona with him. Meantime the Archbishop would proceed to Paris; and woe to Philip and to France, if the Bavarian knight had been executed! The anathema of papal excommunication should be pronounced against Philip.

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The Friar and Bona arrived at the

dame's castle, on the banks of the Iser, without any adventure ; and then D'Esculo — long the esteemed friend of the noble Beatrix — demanded her hospitality for Bona, without alleging any motive beyond her having accompanied him. It was gently granted.

“ And now, D'Esculo, you will rejoice to hear,” said Beatrix, “ that, after being exposed to the most imminent danger, Rhodolphe arrived here five nights since ; but see, he comes, and will tell you a marvellous tale,— it seems almost improbable. — But this maiden appears ill,” she continued, taking Bona by the hand ; “ she must seek rest.”

She led Bona away ; who, on learning of Rhodolphe being in the palace, could not control her emotion. Of his danger she had not heard,— the tenderness of the friar saved her from the knowledge.

* * * *

The next three weeks to Bona and Rhodolphe were replete with interest. He spent a part of every evening after vespers in Beatrix's apartment, and there, at em-

broidery—an art in which she greatly excelled—sat Bona with the other damsels, while the dame took her high place on the elevated dais, and to which none but the Lord Rhodolphe, the chaplain, and *noble* guests, were admitted. Thus no converse passed between the lovers, yet they were conscious of their mutual sympathy. Sometimes as Bona raised her eyes, they met the Knight's impassioned gaze, then were they cast down, and the needle more attentively employed. None but the friar marked this secret intelligence.

It had been arranged that, the three weeks passed, Bona was to return to Bourges to the holy sisters, and the friar from thence proceed to Hubert Clisson, and acquaint him of his daughter's safety; and Rhodolphe, in despair, formed a thousand plans to detain Bona still longer at the castle; but none appeared feasible. To announce to Beatrix, all devout and amiable as she was, his ill-assorted love for the jeweller's daughter, would probably cause her death; and she having suffered so

much in consequence of his former disobedience, he resolved to resign Bona, and with her every hope of happiness, rather than again brave the displeasure of his parent.

On the evening previous to the one fixed for Bona's departure from the castle, the party were, as usual, employed in Dame Beatrix's apartment, when a servitor entered and announced the Primate's unexpected arrival. Ever a welcome guest, his presence was then hailed with double pleasure, as, since Rhodolphe's escape from the Provost's, no intelligence from Paris had reached Munich.

After the first courtesies of his reception, the Primate entered into a detail of the disgrace which had fallen upon Lady Agatha and Sir Foulque D'Evreux; he then announced the death of Gaultier of Longris: all these events were in consequence of the discovery of their guilt. When Beatrix heard of the sad conclusion of the Bishop's life,—he whose equivocal evidence had hurled destruction on the Templars, an emotion of joy swelled her bosom; but,

shocked at the unrighteous triumph, with a silent prayer she conquered the feeling of revenge ; but no duty interfered to control her gratitude to Freida, whose energy had been the means of saving Rhodolphe from an ignominious death, and who would have died to release him ; and, though the means adopted had been evil, still Beatrix —a mother—could not condemn her ; and, fearing lest others might, she abruptly interrupted some remark of the Primate's, by saying, in a tone of impatience,—

“ Good Primate, willingly would I hear more of this young enthusiast, Chretien Lagravare, who, full of the spirit of a pure though mistaken romance, would perish rather than break through his solemn vow. Altogether, your explanation of these strange scenes savours more of a troubadour's exaggerated tale than a stern reality. You should belong to the *gai science*, my friend,” she added, playfully.

“ Oh, have patience !” he replied, in the same cheerful manner ; “ I have events to relate far more marvellous.”

“ Impossible !” she interrupted, smiling.

“ Only listen attentively. Lady Beatrix, you have seen Freida the Jongleur ? Well, her son Edrid, by his enthusiastic piety, the beauty of his form, and exquisite voice, won on my affections : I loved him as a son. To be brief, at my desire, Enguerand Marigni, with the assistance of Jacques de Lor, the youth’s uncle, one night having administered a strong opiate to Edrid, succeeded in taking a cast of his person, and from that a waxen image was formed,—the likeness admirable ! Some other time, noble dame, I shall be more explicit. Enough for the present.

“ It was in the stronghold of the Provost—and there I first saw Edrid—that the cast was taken ; and when the young Jongleur was condemned to death, assisted by the Père Lagravare, Hubert Clisson and De Lor substituted the waxen image. It was borne to Montfaucon, and passed through the awful forms of execution undiscovered. Meanwhile Edrid was placed with me in the royal carriage of De Valois,”—here the

Primate laughed heartily at the recollection of his *ruse*, and of the De Valois' consternation ; then he continued, "Edrid, under the name of Chretien," — here the company present simultaneously uttered an exclamation of surprise, — "resided with me, and, after I was appointed to the primacy, with the Père Lagravare, the received opinion being that he was a son of my unfortunate brother. Alas ! no ! Of his children, those who survived fled from France !" Some moments elapsed ere the Primate resumed his relation.

" It had been our intention to acquaint the Jongleur of the fact of her son's preservation, but her being solely under the influence of Charles, Count de Valois, interfered with our communication. In short, a concatenation of events rendered the revelation impossible. Then the Jongleur was supposed to have perished in the tower of Montfaucon ; and subsequently, when the friar met her in Grenoble, she escaped by some unknown means ; thus the persecuted Freida was the cause of her own misery.

“ I shall now return to events subsequent to the execution of the wretched *Chef des rats*.

“ On returning to the Louvre the King instituted such active inquiries, as to the circumstance of Chretien’s being offered up to save Rhodolphe, as to render further mystery impossible. Lady Agatha D’Abeis’ testimony was the clearest, for after the Queen had related her part in the tragedy, Agatha was threatened with torture if she held back a single word,—and we must commiserate the unhappy lady, who, from the mere levity of riding forth alone to the Jongleurs’ camp to learn her future destiny, became involved in such a tissue of shame and misery : first, a ruffian Jongleur attempted to insult the damsel ; and then, from illness, for days she was obliged to remain in the encampment of these Pagans. Though particulars were not known, still in Laval Agatha was disgraced. Happily Jane D’Artois, unconscious of the report, received and esteemed her ; but when Freida appeared at the Louvre, by the mere threat

of exposing her disgrace, she obliged Agatha to obey in all things.

“The rage of Philip, on hearing the particulars of the nefarious transactions carried on, was terrible ; such injustice cast a stigma upon his reign.

“‘By the hosts of heaven !’ he loudly exclaimed, ‘each and all of the conspirators who have wrought this disgrace on my justice shall suffer ! For you, Agatha D’Abeis, you depart this day for Laval to be placed in the Carmelite nunnery ! The diocesan shall be apprised of your crimes, and the Church award their punishment !’

“‘Oh ! spare me,’ she cried, with a shudder, ‘and let me abide by your royal justice ! — from the Church I expect no mercy.’

“‘Nay, hope no mercy !’ he exclaimed ; and he issued orders to have her removed from the apartment, and which the Queen, who had not courage to meet Agatha, had before quitted. I presumed to plead to his Majesty for some clemency, my pity being aroused for the damsel.

“ ‘Sir Primate,’ said Philip, ‘it were a weakness to intercede for those who to their selfish views would have hurled this gentle Bona and Chretien to death, free as they were of crime ! And now, my friend, we must insist upon your acknowledging this youth as your nephew,—all guess him to be the son of Enguerand Marigni, and we wait impatiently for the opportunity to compensate him for the evils wrought on his family by our departed brother, Louis Hutin, who, deceived by sycophants—such ever surround royalty, and it is their selfish policy to shield the truth from kingly knowledge,—was persuaded to legalise these horrible crimes of superstition and cruelty against his well-beloved Minister.’

“ ‘Sire, he is not my nephew,’ I replied ; ‘the successful villainy of Charles de Valois led to the destruction or banishment of Enguerand’s whole family. At present, except myself, not a Marigny is in France.’

“ ‘Then who can this youth be?’ demanded the King with surprise.

“ ‘Excuse me, your majesty ; a mystery

attends Chretien,—one that I am not at liberty to explain. Enough, he is dear to me as a son ; and though I love mercy, I consider that to spare the Bishop of Longris or Sir Foulque would be a weakness,—a want of justness and of mercy to society ; if crimes like theirs remained unpunished, there would be no safety for the innocent,—then would sin be triumphant !'

" 'I have commanded that Longris and Sir Foulque be seized, cast into irons, and so brought here. To-morrow I shall convoke a meeting of prelates and barons, and by their decision shall the traitors be condemned !' said Philip.

" 'Right, my royal master !' I replied.

" Subsequently," continued the Primate, " I learned that Freida, aware that in some degree she had been the means of involving Longris and Sir Foulque in the removing of Bona from the Louvre, also that they had taken no part in winning over Chretien to fill Rhodolphe's place, following up the romantic generosity of her complex character, had early apprised them of their danger,

and they had fled from Paris. Sir Foulque, I have lately heard, has joined the Freebooting troops collecting in Guienne, a position just suitable for the Roturier's *élève*. Gaultier dared not appear in his diocese of Longris. Collecting all the wealth he could by any method thus hastily obtain, he set off for Natolia, but his mental sufferings and trials were too great; he was seized with brain-fever, and died in a miserable hostel on the road-side. Lady Beatrix, I had already apprised you of the Bishop's demise. One word more, and then to the banquet, for much I need refreshment. Philip has dealt leniently by the Queen, her errors being the result of a weakness not far removed from imbecility; and the strange revelations which came to his knowledge having removed his jealousy relative to the Bavarian's attention to his Queen, although in the first ebullition of his frenzy Philip had ordered her to be imprisoned, ere I left Paris she was restored to favour, and is now again residing at the Louvre."

CHAPTER XIX.

“The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.”—JOB, xx.

“The eternal counsels of God are indeed immutable, though they appear to us men to be altered by the prayers of the pious.”—DANTE’S *Paradise*.

AFTER the events recorded, Freida, panting to be admitted into the bosom of the Christian Church, whose doctrines had for years struggled in her bosom for pre-eminence over idolatry, remorse, and crime, even with the almost certainty of being doomed to an ignominious death, sought out Beauvais the Primate. At once he recognised her, promised protection, and then gradually acquainted her with the preservation of her son. To follow up the sentiments of joy, of gratitude, and of self-abasement,

at this discovery, were a vain attempt. Oh! what a lesson for the vain egotism of human wisdom,—truly but foolishness and craft, excepting where it emanates from religion,—pure, true, unadorned religion,—and which requires no extraneous circumstances to brighten its resplendent glories! Here, then, the Jongleur, with all her learning, felt and acknowledged that her terrible trials had been brought about by her own crimes, in sacrificing, even to maternal love, the lofty sentiments of TRUTH and JUSTICE; also in the dark principle which, from a few perverse events in her own life, had contracted her views into gloomy doubts of man's virtue; yea, at the very period that pious men were using the greatest efforts, and at risk of the greatest danger to themselves, for Edrid's and her advantage. Well, sincere was her penitence, noble her views of the Creator and the atonement, as, kneeling in humility and love, she was admitted into the sacraments of the Christian Church.

“No enthusiasm here,” remarked the

Primate ; “but a fixed principle of faith, too perfect in its essence for investigation or doubt.”

We pass over the first meeting of the Jongleur and her son,—the heart may picture, but no pen can delineate such emotions of joy. Here, indeed, through Christ’s mercy, Edrid might be said to have been raised from the dead. Purified in spirit by the late trials of passion and distress, well he had survived the ordeal ; and he resolved to unite with Freida, and take up the cross, casting aside all earthly lusts, and thus seek out redemption for their past sins. To this holy mission, by manifestations of the Spirit, Freida believed herself to be appointed, and hailed her son’s assistance as a blessing.

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It was early evening, Lady Beatrix, on her chair of state, sat smiling at her son ; the usual guests were collected in the baronial hall ; suddenly its doors were thrown open, and, in pilgrims’ guise, staffs in their hands, entered Freida and Edrid : respectfully and

gravely they approached. The noble dame, in pleasure at again seeing the Jongleur, forgetful of state, sprang forward to welcome and embrace her; then she turned towards Edrid, who, his health being improved, looked nobly handsome. Beatrix at once discovered in him a strong resemblance to the Templar. This affected her.

“I claim you as another son,” she cried with emotion, embracing him.

Edrid, who had at length learned the particulars of his birth, caressed her with tenderness. Meanwhile Rhodolphe and the friar advanced, and congratulations and questions passed rapidly; after which Freida, meekly requesting a few moments’ attention, as she had matters of import to reveal, said,—

“May I entreat patience while I advance my request to this noble lady, and you, Bona Clisson, come near. While my spirit was enveloped with darkness, I planned much evil against you, maiden, for that I would offer compensation. And you, too, D’Esculo, deserve a recompense at my hands.”

The whole company surrounded the Jongleur, even to the young damsels. Then Freida explained to the friar—whose joy we attempt not to describe—the manner in which she had found the documents of Bona's birth ; then, uniting the hands of Bona and Rhodolphe, she said, “ Beatrix, this damsel is beloved by your son : she is worthy of him, not because she is nobly,—nay, royally descended, and possessed of wealth, but because she is meek, pious, tender in her affections, and in maiden modesty and purity loves your son in return.”

Trembling from excess of confusion, her face and neck suffused with burning blushes, Bona would have leant on the friar, but Rhodolphe, passionately clasping her to his bosom, fell on his knees, gently drawing her after him, then, addressing Beatrix, said,—

“ I supplicate your consent to our union, and if, previous to the discovery of Bona's birth, I did not demand her hand, it was because I dreaded your opposition, and knowing that you had suffered so much from my first and only act of disobedience,

I trembled to again awaken your displeasure."

The noble dame cast her arms around them with tenderness, as she replied,—

"Without the Emperor's approbation, he who has been our protector and friend, I presume not to give my consent. Obtain his, and proudly will I claim this gentle damsel as my daughter."

"It is granted!" exclaimed a loud voice; and the Emperor, accompanied by the Archbishop of Bourges, entered, and with cheerful courtesy greeted the party.

When the embarrassment, caused by their appearance, had passed away and composure was restored, the Archbishop of Bourges mentioned that, on his return from Paris, not anticipating the recovery of the certificate of Bona's birth, he had paid his devoirs to the Emperor to interest him in favour of supporting Bona Clisson's rights to the D'Evreux property, now that the ferocious Sir Foulque was not there to dispute her claims, he being for ever outlawed from France.

Bona, now casting herself at the Emperor's feet, and bursting into a passion of tears, entreated that her nuptials would not be concluded upon with Lord Rhodolphe without Hubert Clisson's consent.

"I owe him," she cried, with emotion, "the duty and the affection of a child; and if I presumed to disobey him when he would have united me to Paul Deschamps, it was because nature and religion instructed me that to wed a man I abhorred must be a crime!"

"Bona," said the Archbishop of Bourges, "having long watched over you, and being fully aware of your position, I have guarded against every emergency likely to interfere with the celebration of your nuptials with Rhodolphe."

On saying these words, he retired, but quickly returned, followed by Hubert Clisson, whom he had brought with him from Paris. The stern jeweller, ashamed of the severity with which he had treated his daughter, and for which Philip had severely reprimanded him, finding that

her cause was adopted by her own proud class,—the hated aristocracy, resolved to leave her to the destiny she preferred and to adopt Paul Deschamps as his son. So, though in a churlish, stern manner, he gave his full sanction to her union with the noble descendant of the Ghibelline; besides granting his consent, he acted generously, assigning to her much wealth, the fruits of his industry, over and above the D'Evreux estates, over which he had no control. After this he quitted Munich, haughtily observing, that the humble artisan was no fitting guest at a noble's nuptials. Bona regretted his prejudices and absence, it was the only cloud which shaded her happiness; for within the month, under auspices the most brilliant, she became the bride of Rhodolphe, the Emperor acting towards her at the nuptial ceremony—which was performed by the Archbishop of Bourges—the part of a father.

Impelled by far different motives, Freida and Chretien also took their departure from Lady Beatrix's castle. Having taken up the

Cross, casting aside all worldly interests and passions, it was their ardent desire to perform the divine mission to which they had been so miraculously chosen, in a manner worthy of their High-priest. And now the knowledge, which in the days of her disbelief, had been a source of anxiety and dark affliction to Freida, being directed to its proper purpose, the glory of God became a light in her path. Several of the Saxons continued, though secretly, to perform their rites of Paganism. Freida, considering the love of one's country as one of the purest and most ennobling sentiments of the human heart, and viewing Saxony as hers, proceeded in her divine office to Hesse and Thuringia, and there for seven years successfully preached the Gospel, Chretien assisting her with indefatigable zeal.

From thence they removed to Lithuania, where, to the disgrace of the Christian princes and rulers of Christendom, idolatry was the established religion, and the dark mysteries of fetish-worship celebrated with all its revolting sacrifices ; — and there, sur-

rounded by dangers so numerous that the hand of Providence could alone have upheld them, they preached Christ, in the plain, unvarnished simplicity of the first disciples of the blessed and most merciful Redeemer.

A circumstance simple in its details tended much to their success. They were staying at Wylma,* and Freida had been successful in allaying a sickness then raging throughout the country ; her fame extended, and Jagello, the infant son of the Grand Duke, being attacked by the disease, she was summoned, and promised great reward if she raised him from the bed of sickness. The babe recovered, and the only guerdon she would accept was permission to elevate the Cross, and preach in Lithuania the words of God. The boon was readily granted. Amidst the infinity of the Lithuanian gods the introduction of a new one seemed a matter of indifference or of novelty. This brought Freida and her son frequently into the company of the Archduke, and other chieftains of the land, also of their vassals,

* Wilkomer.

which consisted of the impoverished nobility, an humbled, subdued race.

Could Freida gain the nobler classes as proselytes, she well knew that the inferior ones would be influenced by their example. And now it was that her varied knowledge and genius had full scope. It were tedious to follow her through the scenes and dangers she passed ; the inspiration of faith and hope never failing. Success followed her efforts, and, within a few years, amidst the widely-spreading forests, and on the fertile shores of the Dnieper and Dwina, on the mountains' tops,—nay, to the confines of Russia and of Poland, proudly, gloriously rose the cross of redemption and of hope ; and thousands,—nay, tens of thousands, zealously upholding the blessed faith, crushed their idols—works of men's hands—beneath their feet.

Peace, mercy, and long-suffering, was the scriptural doctrine preached by Freida and her son. How beautiful were the footsteps of those who, taking Christ as their guide, in days of cruelty and per-

secution, had cast aside the firebrands of anarchy and controversy, and sought to unite all CHRISTIAN creeds in love and charity !

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Although the Jongleurs had thus laid the foundation of Christianity in this benighted land, Freida did not live to see the great work perpetuated. It was not until the year 1386 that Jagello, Duke of Lithuania,—he who in his childhood Freida had restored to health,—influenced by the impress received from her instructions, on the death of his father, avowed his religious sentiments, and was publicly baptized, with all the members of his family and court. Edrid, though far advanced in life, was one of the officiating priests ; and within a few months subsequently the whole kingdom followed their Duke's example, and Lithuania became a Christian land.

NOTES.

Marigni was universally mourned, even to the royal family putting on black . . . his relatives resided in the Louvre.—Vol. iii. p. 28.

“Louis X. was so oppressed with remorse for the injuries which he had allowed to be exercised against De Marigni, that he bequeathed 10,000 livres to his widow and children.”—*Library of Useful Knowledge*.

Unable to disguise my regret, on the day of Philip's coronation I fled from Rheims.—Vol. iii. p. 36.

“Charles de Valois was ^{so} strongly opposed to the succession of Philip, that he quitted Rheims on the morning of his coronation, and refused to assist in it.”—*Library of Useful Knowledge*.

Charles de Valois is but a breathing corpse.—Vol. iii. p. 36.

“Mais rien ne le justifie Marigni mieux que la satisfaction publique que lui fit le Compte de Valois humanisé aux après lorsqu'il se crut prêt d'aller rendre compte au tribunal de Dieu, d'une si excessive violence. Le Prince étant tombé en apoplexie et

demeure paralytique de la moitié du corps, regarde le mal comme un châtiment de l'injustice comise contre Marigni. Il ordonne qu'un distribuit une grosse somme d'argent à tous les pauvres de Paris, et ceux qui saisaient cette distribution disaint à chaque pauvre en lui donnant l'ausmone, Priez Dieu pour Monseigneur Enguerand, et pour Monsieur Charlé, nomment toujour suivant l'ordre qu'ils en avaient Enguerand avant le Prince.”—*Histoire de France*, par P. G. DANIEL.

Restitution to the family of Marigni.—Vol. iii. p. 41.

“Charles de Valois, while labouring under the disease which proved mortal to him, although not till several years afterwards, restored to Marigni's family a confiscated estate, and performed a funeral service; at great cost, in commemoration of the murdered statesman.”—*Library of Useful Knowledge*.

Legends of the war-wolf.—Vol. iii. p. 64.

“The demoniacal power of the war-wolf is of very ancient tradition, some centuries before Christ . . . War-wolf, or Lycanthropus, signifies a magician possessing the power of transforming himself into a wolf for the purpose of ravaging and devastation.”—*Notes to Scott's Minstrelsy*.

Camden explains the tales of the Irish, concerning men transformed into wolves. Some interesting anecdotes connected with the war-wolf superstition will be found in Gough's edition of “Camden.”

*Rose-buds of Jericho balm extracted from
the roses' stems.*—Vol. iii. p. 92.

“ In the plain of Jericho there are roses of Jericho (as they call them) they blow not unless they be put into water ; and they blow in all seasons, and at any hour, contrary to the opinion of those who say they blow not but in Christmas night ; and others, on all the festival days of our Lady.

“ ‘ It was in the garden of Mataria,’ says Maillet, ‘ that the famous balm was produced, which entered into the composition of the chrism, which the Copt Church made use of in the baptism of infants, and its species is now absolutely lost.’”—*Observations on various Passages of Scriptures*, by the Rev. THOMAS HARMER.

The bridal veil.—Vol. iii. p. 142.

In speaking of Eastern marriages, the Rev. Thomas Harmer says, “ The bride continues veiled with a red gauze.”—*Note by the Author.*

The Crusades had introduced several Oriental habits and customs into Europe, moreover into France, where, during the fourteenth century, bridal veils of rose-colour were in request among ladies of high degree.—*Note by the Author.*

Deaths as horrible as those inflicted by Philip le Bel on his daughters-in-law for their adultery.—
Vol. iii. p. 266.

“ The three princesses, to whom Philip’s three sons had been married, proved unfaithful to their marriage-

beds. The Queen of Navarre, daughter to the Duke of Burgundy, and the Count de la Marche's wife, were convicted of adultery with Philip, and Walter de Launai, who were, in regard to their persons, far inferior to those of the princes they had wronged. The ladies were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, and their lovers with their pandars, after being flayed alive, were hanged upon gibbets. This sentence did not satisfy the King of Navarre, for he ordered his wife to be strangled in the place of her confinement.”—GUTHRIE’s *History of the World*.

So perished the Provost of Paris.—Vol. iii. p. 281.

“The cause of justice in this court (the Chastellet) had been so monstrously perverted, that the Provost of Paris offered to acquit a rich man who could bribe him, and hang a poor one in his stead, and for his crime. This fact being proved, the Provost himself was hanged, and Philip V. ordered that all his successors should preside in the Chastellet and administer justice in person.”—GUTHRIE’s *History of the World*.

Philip dealt leniently by the Queen.—Vol. iii. p. 298.

“Jane D’Artois (Queen) had been condemned to imprisonment upon the charge of adultery, yet Philip, either out of love or justice, believed her to be innocent, and took her back to his bed.”—GUTHRIE’s *History of the World*.

Jagello, the Duke of Lithuania.—Vol. iii. p. 310.

“Jagello, Duke of Lithuania, was an idolater until the year 1386, when, with his whole court, he embraced Christianity, his subjects following his example.”—*MOSHEIM’s Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i.

“Jagellon, Grand Duke of Lithuania, embraced the Christian faith, and was baptized by the name of Uladislaus.”—*Edinburgh Cyclopaedia*.

“The reign of idolatry was closed by the conversion of Lithuania in the fourteenth century.”—*GIBBON’s Roman Empire*, vol. x.

Within the compass of a Romance, I have attempted to delineate some of the most extraordinary events of a period designated by Gibbon in his “Roman Empire,” “The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were the age of absurdity and fable.”—*The Author.*

THE END.





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